A Study of
Anthropomorphism and Transcendence in the Bible and Qur'ān

Scripture and God in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic Traditions

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To my father
Sayyed Abbas Shah
and my mother Razia Abbas
for their guidance, support, and constant prayers

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

The Bible and the Qur'ān are the Scriptures of three Semitic religions. The Bible has been held by many Jews and Christians as the inerrant Word of God. The modern scholarship has shown the illogicity of such a claim. Not all of the modern Jews accept the divine origin and authority of the Hebrew Bible. Christendom is even more divided over the divine origin and authority of their Scripture. Many modern scholars have highlighted the human elements in the Bible. The lengthy processes of canonization and compilation which resulted in the Bible are indicative of this finite human aspect. The Qur'ān was canonized from its inception. The careful preservation of the Qur'ānic text started with the faith's founder and compilation of the entire text into a written volume was completed within a few years from his death. The Qur'ān has been accepted as the Word of God verbatim by Muslims of all ages and times. The unity, integrity, and universality of the Qur'ānic text is an historical fact recognized even by the modern non-Muslim scholarship.

The Hebrew Bible's God paradigm is anthropomorphic and progressive. The divine unity and transcendence is neither presented systematically nor safeguarded properly. The Christian Incarnational theology is also anthropomorphic and corporeal. It is problematic and contradictory in its traditional literal sense. Such an understanding of the divinity of Christ was a result of centuries of later reflections and not necessarily what Jesus preached about himself. The Qur'ānic God paradigm is transcendental. God's unity, uniqueness, and transcendence is systematically presented, properly safeguarded, and manifestly connected with the moral aspect of the human life.

The author claims that the Qur'ān can contribute more than the Bible in the modern debates regarding God. The thesis concludes that the Qur'ānic God paradigm is better suited for the modern times.

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Introduction

I was born and raised in a traditional religious family and to a certain degree pressured or even forced to commit the Arabic text of the entire Qur'ān to memory without my understanding much of it. This happened in my early childhood when boys of my age and close friends of mine were free in the world to enjoy themselves. My countless "whys" and relentless questions used to infuriate my father and usually ended with a desperate but authoritative response, "Because this is the Word of God Almighty." This childhood experience resulted in a kind of affinity as well as some negative sentiments in my mind about the terms "God" and the "Word of God".

I carried this admixture of sentiments during most of my college career. When I became a university student, I had the opportunity to learn Arabic language. This experience had a dazzling and profound effect on my thoughts. Finally I was able to make some sense out of the text I had memorized and recited over the years. The experience was fulfilling and absorbed most of my time. The negative sentiments about my parents, anchored in my heart since early childhood, gradually gave way to sentiments of appreciation, respect and finally love. In later years of my university studies, I became more interested in comparative studies of topics like "God," "Scriptures," "Word of God" and other related topics that led me to my Masters in Comparative Religions. The same interest changed into enthusiasm during my teaching career in Islamabad, briefly in Lampeter and finally in Jacksonville, Florida.

As the Qur'ān and the Bible both are the professed Scriptures and primary sources of three Semitic religions, I became more and more absorbed in their comparative study and soon found myself trespassing on territories that for centuries have been debated and discussed by countless scholars and theologians. But there was a different environment now. There were different tools, different approaches, and different methodology. The results achieved in these areas by modern scholarship differed widely from the one's achieved in the previous centuries. There was more openness, boldness, fairness and objectivity. Still more, the situation was more dramatic than I could have ever envisioned or envisaged. The God of traditional religions seemed to be disappearing. This act of divine disappearance was more radical, and the absence of God whom I used to think was very much with me, was evident and felt in the West more than in my homeland which I had left for educational purposes. This polarization of understanding, dichotomy and bifurcation of reality and faith, and personal sense of loss and alienation resulted in the work I am presenting in this treatise.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I state the problem, give an account of the historical background and define the related categories. The second chapter traces the authenticity, authority, the textual purity, and validity of the Hebrew Bible. It continues by elaborating the transcendental and anthropomorphic tendencies within the text of the Hebrew Bible with some discussions of the same in Rabbinic theology. The third chapter explores some of the crucial points regarding the compilation, canonization, authority, and in a sense authenticity and purity, of the New Testament text. The crux of the chapter is the discussion of various New Testament theologies and their historical development. It culminates in some traditional and modern interpretations of Christology or the Person of Jesus Christ. The fourth chapter consists of similar efforts to explore several significant issues related to the authority, authenticity and purity of the text of the Qur'ān. The chapter culminates with an excursion and examination of transcendental and anthropomorphic tendencies in the Qur'ān, and to a certain extent, in subsequent Islamic history. This chapter is followed by the conclusions.

In view of the sensitivity and delicate nature of the subject, efforts are made not to claim or state something without proper documentation and substantiation; therefore, the thesis may seem heavily dependent upon the quoted material. The entire effort is meant to avoid misconceptions, confusions, and possible blame of bias, prejudice or bigotry. Every effort has been made to depend wholly and solely on Jewish and Christian sources while discussing the Bible and the related topics. All medieval as well as modern Islamic polemics against the Bible have been intentionally avoided. On the other hand, I have explored Western views and scholarship to the best of my ability while discussing many issues related to the Qur'ān or it's God Paradigm.

It is hoped that the thesis will generate thoughtful interest and will be helpful in initiating a positive dialogue between the followers of three Abrahamic faith traditions. These traditions enjoy many commonalties and, also have distinctions and differences. These differences and the variety of perspectives and views could be and should be discussed with a sense of serenity and understanding and with the goal of strengthening mutual ties, enhancing universal brotherhood and appreciation for diversity and co-existence. Such a dialogue is one of the ways that the God of Abraham could possibly be brought back to this world of here and now where He is needed the most.

I would like to thank all of my teachers, especially Dr. Ḥasan Maḥmūd `Abd al-Laṭīf al-Shāfʻī and Dr. Anis Ahmad, for their love and guidance which gave me the spirit, the impetus, and the tools needed to embark upon this task. I also thank all those friends and colleagues, like Dr. Anwar Ahmad of the University of Florida, Mr. Ghassān al-Barqāwī of Jacksonville, for lending me several of their books, those like Walid Elansari, Robert C. Bradly, Lisa Aboudan, Najmah Shahbaz, Raja Matthew, Shakur Bolden, Saif and Omar Qarghas, for their technical and mechanical help, and others such as Mr. M. Ashraf Shaikh and other members of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Center of Northeast Florida who have always encouraged me and supported me. To all of them I am grateful.

It is impossible to acknowledge fully the debt I owe to Professor Paul Badham under whose supervision this study was completed. I am grateful to him for his tireless work, support, guidance, his stimulating enthusiasm, honest and fair criticism, and friendship. During these long

years that I was privileged to work with him, he has showed himself as an inspiring guide, diligent supervisor, well versed and specialized in many areas, punctual, patient, and objective. I will always appreciate his scholarship, professionalism, fairness, and friendship.

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Zulfiqar Ali Shah
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The Problem, Background, and the Defining Categories

Is God dead? asked Time magazine in its issue of April 8 1960. Yes "God is dead", responded three American scholars. These were Thomas Altizer of Emory University in Atlanta; William Hamilton of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, and Paul Van Buren of Temple University.[1] This bold response to a very extraordinary question proved to be the birth of "The Death of God" school and one culmination of centuries of curiosities, research, and inquiry concerning the "Transcendent God" of theism.

These claims about the death of God were neither unusual nor new. It had been implied in the writings of many a philosophers and scientists. But to speak of "the death of God" in its modern grab is to invoke the name of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900),[2] who raised his cry in these very words at the end of last century. Writing about the stages in the process of God's death, Nietzsche observed, that ancient people had many gods. First, the many gods gave way to "an old grim-beard", "a jealous" God when "the ungodliest utterance came from a God himself." He declared that "There is but one God! Thou shalt have no other gods before me!" Then all other gods, as Nietzsche puts it, laughing and shaking upon their thrones exclaimed the interesting secret: "Is it not just divinity that there are Gods but no God?", and expired from their laughter.[3] The old multiple deities, according to Nietzsche, were energetic and useful as they were connected with some human needs or some forces in the nature. The one God who replaced them was so transcendent that he was beyond humans creating will.[4] On the other hand, he was too much intrusive, disturbing, and involved in human affairs. "The God who beheld every thing, and also man: that God had to die! Man cannot endure that such a witness should live."[5] Commenting on Nietzsche's observations, Paul Ramsey explains that such a God "was too much God-with us, God in human, all-too-human form. He mixed too much in human affairs, even manifesting himself in this miserable flesh. In a sense, God's fellow-humanity killed him."[6] He further observes, that "After the gods made in man's image, the God who proposed to make and remake man in his own image, that God too had to die."[7]

The "death of God" was necessary to liberate man from the unlimited restrictions or so-called religious interpretations of man and the universe that were imposed in the name of God upon the cultural products of men. This death, writes Karl Lowith, "demands of the man who wills himself, to whom no God says what he must do, that he transcends man at the same time as he is freed from God."[8] Men were to be autonomous and unlimited creators of their cultures and destinies. They used to accomplish this task by projecting into cosmos their fears and aspirations, by creating their gods, but now they could achieve this autonomy through science and philosophy.

So, Nietzsche observes, "God is dead in the hearts of men, science and rationalism have killed him."[9] Livingston, observes, that the outcome of this development is "the death of the ultimate ground and support of all traditional values. For over two thousand years men have derived their "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" from God, but that is now coming to an end."[10]

By this "half-poetic, half-prophetic"[11]phrase Nietzsche meant to represent those great many critics of theistic understanding of God who had asserted for the past many centuries that the traditional, official, and transcendent God of theism has lost His authority over and usefulness to the world. This phrase implies that "In man the consciousness of an ultimate in the traditional sense has died."[12] The God who used to be worshipped as Creator of the universe, is no more accepted as the creator of man and his surroundings. In fact, it is the other way around. It is man who created God in his own image in himself.

The projection theories or claims about the human source of notions of the divine are not recent. It could be traced back to Xenophanes (BC 570-470), as old as six hundred years before Jesus Christ. Xenophanes, criticizing the anthropomorphism of Homer and Hesiod in their portrayal of gods, pointed out that "if oxen (and horses) and lions ...could draw with hands and create works of art like those made by men, horses would draw pictures of gods like horses, and oxen of gods like oxen...Aethiopians have gods with snub noses and black hair, Thracians have gods with grey eyes and red hair."[13] It has also long been claimed that nature of religions and of gods is the product of man's attempts to understand and desire to control disturbingly puzzling natural phenomena around him. In the presence of hundreds of these religions and gods, or in the words of Cicero, "in this medley of conflicting opinions, one thing is certain. Though it is possible that they are all of them false, it is impossible that more than one of them is true."[14] It is the "Awe", according to Cicero, evoked by terrifying natural phenomena and attempts to comprehend the power behind them, which has helped to produce conflicting religious opinions and the images of divine.[15]

In the fifteenth century, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) virtually substantiated Cicero's observations by noting that human beings in their understanding of things rely upon causes that "have relation clearly to the nature of man rather than to the nature of the universe."[16] These significant observations were hallmark of a new era, the era of science. Bacon is regarded by great many as the philosopher of modern science and the "prophet of empiricism."[17] William Wotton long ago wrote: "My Lord Bacon was the first Great man who took much pains to convince the World that they had hitherto been in a wrong Path, and that Nature herself, rather than her Secretaries, was to be addressed to by those who were desirous to know much of her mind."[18] S. E. Guthrie pays his homage to Bacon with the following words: "No clear beginning can be found for science in the modern sense, but most historians of science regard Bacon as the prophet of empiricism and hence of the separation of science from philosophy. Bacon also sounds the first clear warning against anthropomorphism. He rejects Aristotle, for example, largely for the latter's anthropomorphism. Bacon's warning has become a hallmark of subsequent science."[19] Bacon maintained, that man anthropomorphizes. He finds the source of anthropomorphism in his famous four sets of "idols and false notions",[20] namely the idols of the tribe, cave, marketplace, and theater. Bacon observes that "The Idols of the Tribe have their foundations in human nature itself, and in the tribe or race of men. For it is a false assumption that the sense of man is the measure of

things. On contrary, all perceptions as well of the sense as of the mind are according to the measure of the individual and not according to the measure of the universe. And human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolors the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it."[21] He further held, that the human perceptions are dependent upon human feelings and are motivated by them: "The human understanding is no dry light, but receives an infusion from the will and affections." "Numberless, in short, are the ways, and sometimes imperceptible, in which the affections color and infect the understanding."[22] Bacon pinpointed the fundamental weakness of the human thought and its major stumbling block i.e., the human tendency to anthrpomorphize. Joseph Aggasi, a modern philosopher of science, rates Bacon as the "*locus classicus*" of the critique of anthropomorphism.[23]

In the sixteenth century, Bernard Fontenelle (1657-1757) renewed the old Ciceriam approach by proposing a "universal evolutionary framework"[24] for the development of human thought and culture. Fontenelle himself was quite aware of the revolutionary nature of his observations: "Will what I am going to say be believed? There was philosophy even in those crude centuries, and it greatly assisted the growth of myths. Men whose intelligence is more acute than most are naturally inclined to seek the cause of what they see..."[25] These ancient philosophers used the same method as that of ours to explain the unseen and unknown phenomena, that "the unknown cannot be entirely different from what is known to us at present."[26] The ancient mind worked out the myth, the earliest form of science and philosophy, the same way as our mind works it out. Although they used crude images and metaphors vastly different from our sophisticated technological symbols and images. Fontenelle argued, that "This philosophy of the first centuries revolved on a principle so natural that even today our philosophy has none other; that is to say, that we explain...unknown natural things by those which we have before our eyes, and that we carry over to natural science...those things furnished us by experience."[27] The natural forces beyond human control lead people to imagine beings "more powerful than themselves, capable of producing these grand effects."[28]

The diversity of natural forces explains the multitude of primitive divinities, "Nothing proves the great antiquity of these divinities better or marks more clearly the route the imagination took...in shaping them. The first man knew of no better quality than physical force; wisdom and justice had not even a name in the ancient languages, as they still do not today among the savages of America."[29] Therefore, "It was quite necessary that the gods reflect...both the times at which they were created and the circumstances which brought them into existence."[30] Hence Cicero, in the opinion of Fontenelle, was mistaken and unfair in calling the anthropomorphic gods of Homer as crude: "what he in his time saw as qualities befitting gods were not at all known in the time of Homer."[31] It goes without saying that the gods are anthropomorphic in nature as they are the products of human thoughts and circumstances, and that the nature, qualities, and attributes of gods change with the change of human thought patterns and cultures.

The seventeenth century philosopher Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) follows Bacon in criticizing human tendency of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism.[32] To him, our perceptions of the world are nothing but the extension of our views regarding ourselves. As we do things for certain ends, likewise, we perceive the nature working for specific ends. But when the humans "cannot learn such causes from external causes, they are compelled to turn to considering

themselves, and reflecting what end would have induced them personally to bring about the given event, and thus they necessarily judge other natures by their own."[33] They further look "on the whole of nature as a means for obtaining such conveniences. Now as they are aware, that they found these conveniences and did not make them, they think they have cause for believing, that some other being has made them for their use. As they look upon things as means, they cannot believe them to be self-created; but, judging from the means which they are accustomed to prepare for themselves, they are bound to believe in some ruler or rulers of the universe...who have arranged and adapted everything for human use."[34]

David Hume (1711-76), "the fine flower of the English ...eighteenth century mind", and a staunch "defender of Nature against Reason",[35] pioneered this line of approach in our modern times. He gave a more detailed account of anthropomorphic nature of the divine. To him, the notions about the divine did not spring "from reason but from the natural uncertainties of life and out of fear of the future; it functioned in giving the individual confidence and hope in his or her "anxious concern for happiness". It was a means of overcoming the "disordered scene" of human life."[36] Looking at the idea of God in an evolutionary perspective, Hume disposed of the theory of an original monotheism, and considered the earliest form of religion to be that of idolatry or polytheism. To Hume the origin of the idea of God turned out, as Basil Willey puts it, to be "much less respectable than an eighteenth century theist might have hoped. It was not by contemplating the spacious firmament on high that primitive man arrived at his notions of a divine original. He simply personified his own hopes and fears, and then proceeded to worship and placate the gods he made in his own image."[37]

After putting the world of ideas in the realm of human experience, "our ideas reach no farther than our experience",[38] and that "all our ideas... are copies of our impressions",[39] Hume argued, that even refined and abstract ideas like that of the divine or God sprang only from "the materials afforded us by the senses and experience."[40] Therefore, according to Hume, "the first idea of religion arose not from a contemplation of the works of nature, but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from incessant hopes and fears, which actuate the human mind."[41] Man is worried about the "future causes", he has "the anxious concern for happiness, the dread of future misery, the terror of death, the thirst for revenge, the appetite for food and other necessaries. Agitated by hopes and fears of this nature, especially the latter, men scrutinize, with trembling curiosity, the course of future causes, and examine the various and contrary events of human life."[42] This sheer anxiety leads man to imagine and formulate ideas about these powers: "These unknown causes, then, become the constant object of our hope and fear; and while the passions are kept in perpetual alarm by an anxious expectation of the events, the imagination is equally employed in forming ideas of those powers, on which we have so entire a dependence."[43]

Such an imagination leads man to personification. Hume argues that there is a universal tendency among mankind "to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object, those qualities, with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious. We find human faces in the moon, armies in the clouds; and by a natural propensity, if not corrected by experience and reflection, ascribe malice or good-will to every thing, that hurts or pleases us."[44] He brings a number of examples of this "propensity" and further argues, that "No wonder, then, that mankind placed in such an absolute ignorance of causes, and being at the same

time so anxious concerning their future fortune, should immediately acknowledge a dependence on invisible powers, possessed of sentiment and intelligence. The unknown causes which continually employ their thought...are all apprehended to be of the same kind or species. Nor is it long before we ascribe to them thought and reason and passion, and sometimes even the limbs and figures of men, in order to bring them nearer to a resemblance with ourselves."[45] This anthropomorphic tendency of modeling all unknown powers after our familiar human categories, is the foundation of our belief in the divine. Such was the case not only with the primitive man, "Even at this day, and in Europe, ask any of the vulgar, why he believes in an omnipotent creator of the world; he will never mention the beauty of final causes, of which he is wholly ignorant: He will not hold out his hand, and bid you contemplate the suppleness and variety of joints in his fingers, their bending all one way...To these he has been long accustomed; and he beholds them with listlessness and unconcern. He will tell you of the sudden and unexpected death of such a one: The fall and bruise of such another: The excessive drought of this season: The cold and rains of another. This he ascribes to the immediate operation of providence: And such events, as, with good reasoners, are the chief difficulties in admitting a supreme intelligence, are with him the sole arguments for it."[46]

In light of what has been discussed, J. C. A. Gaskin and J. S. Preus declare Hume to be more the founder of the scientific study of religion than of the sociology or the philosophy of religion. For instance Preus observes, that Hume "stands in this account as the pivotal figure, being our clearest exemplar of the self-conscious turn from a theological to a scientific paradigm for the study of religion."[47] Such a perspective and evaluation of Hume manifestly differs from those of modern historians of the study of religion. W. C. Smith, a well known figure in the field, honors Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) as the representative of Enlightenment view of religion and almost discards Hume.[48] Other scholars like E.E. Evans-Pritchard,[49] E. J. Sharp,[50] Jacques Waardenburg,[51] Comstock,[52] and P. Radin,[53] almost all of them begin later than Hume. Gaskin frequently criticizes this tendency of many scholars despite the amount of work available regarding Hume's ideas about religion.[54] In view of what has been discussed, one can conclude with Preus that "although Hume did not originate his anthropomorphic principle (it goes back to the Ionian philosopher Xenophanes), he installed it in the context of a coherent epistemological analysis, and his principle provided a useful point of reference for many successors who shared his assumptions, up to the present day."[55] Comte, Feuerbach, Tylor, and Freud are just a few names to be mentioned here.

Auguste Marie Francois Comte (1798-1857), the father of modern sociology, agreed with Hume and other modern philosophers and idealists in rejecting the transcendental metaphysics and theology. "Hostility to metaphysics," writes Edward Caird, "if by metaphysics be meant the explanation of the facts of experience by entities or causes, which cannot be verified in experience or shown to stand in any definite relation to it, is common feature of all modern philosophy, idealist or sensationalist. It is as clearly manifested in Descartes as in Bacon, in Kant and Hegel as in Lock and Hume."[56] Emphasizing the intimate relationship between ideas and society and the evolutionary nature of human thought, Comte applied his law of the three stages to the religious thought of humanity: the Theological-military, the Metaphysical-feudal, and the Positive-industrial. He located the idea of divine in the first and the primitive stage (Theological) of mankind. He further subdivided this age into three main periods. First: "Fetichism (a term

coined by Charles De Brosses, a French contemporary of Hume)- Beginning of the Theological and Military System". Fetichism, observes Comte, "allowed free exercise to that tendency of our nature by which man conceives of all external bodies as animated by a life analogous to his own, with difference of mere intensity."[57] The motif behind that, as Hume had already observed, was to try to apprehend and make some sense of "unknown effects".[58] As the humans begin with their anthropomorphic understanding that they are "in all respects, the center of the natural system, and consequently endowed with indefinite control over phenomena. This opinion, it is evident, results directly from the supremacy exercised by the imagination, combined with the natural tendency which disposes men in general to form exaggerated ideas of their own importance and power. Such an illusion constitutes the most prominent characteristic of the infancy of human reason."[59] After the idea originated in the anthropomorphic nature of mankind, it then developed into "polytheism",[60] and finally passing through the cultures of Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews,[61] reached in the third stage and was modified into monotheism.[62]

There are many a scholars who do not originate certain ideas, but the way they expand upon already existing ideas and the profound influence they exert upon the history of subsequent thought, make them very conspicuous and distinguished. They provide other genius writers with the spark that, in the words of Isaiah Berlin, "sets on fire the long-accumulated fuel."[63] Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) was such a scholar. He not only developed the above sketched anthropomorphic theory of the essence of religion and gods to its ultimate dimension, but also provided philosophers like Marx and Engels with many crucial and seminal ideas. "Then came Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity", writes Frederick Engels, "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians."[64] Richard Wagner saw in Feuerbach "the ideal exponent of the radical release of the individual."[65] Karl Marx marveled him with the following words: "His work consists in the dissolution of the religious world into its secular basis....Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human."[66] Marx perhaps was right.

To Feuerbach, "What distinguishes man from the brutes is the awareness of a distinctive human nature transcending individuality."[67] Man has reason, will and affection. "Man is nothing without some "objective."...We know man by his object; and in it his nature becomes evident: his object is his manifested nature and his true objective self."[68] Man can not escape his nature: "Not even in our imagination can we transcend human nature; and to the "higher" beings in which we believe we can attribute nothing better than human characteristics."[69] Feuerbach argues, that "The religious object of adoration is nothing but the objectified nature of him who adores",[70] because "the object of a subject is nothing else than this subject's own nature objectified. Such are a man's thoughts and moral character, such is his God; so much worth as man has, so much and no more has his God. Man's being conscious of God is man's being conscious of himself, knowledge of God is man's knowledge of himself. By their God you know men, and by knowing men you know their god; the two are identical. God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of man; religion is the solemn unveiling of man's hidden treasures, the revelation of his most intimate thoughts, the open confession of what he secretly loves."[71] He further argues, that if the divine predicates are merely anthropomorphic as is often observed, "then the subject of them is merely an anthropomorphism too. If love, goodness, personality, etc., are human attributes, then their subject, the existing God to whom you attribute these attributes, and the very belief that there is a

God, are also anthropomorphisms-i.e., presuppositions purely human in origin."[72] Therefore "God is your highest idea, the highest conception of your intellect, the highest conception you can possibly have."[73] Feuerbach concludes arguing: "This doctrine of mine is briefly as follows. *Theology is anthropology:* in other words, the object of religion, which in Greek we call *theos* and in our language God, expresses nothing other than the deified essence of man, so that the history of religion or, what amounts to the same thing, of God-for the gods are as varied as the religions, and the religions are as varied as mankind-is nothing other than the history of man."[74]

Feuerbach, like Hume and others, maintains that the idea of God originates from human needs, desires, wishes, and shortcomings in human life, "the feeling of hunger or discomfort, the fear of death, gloom when the weather is bad, joy when it is good, grief over wasted pains, over hopes shattered by natural catastrophes; all these are feelings of dependency; but to subsume particular phenomena of reality under universal names and concepts is precisely the task implicit in the nature of thought and speech."[75] In short, "the foundation of religion is a feeling of dependency; the first object of that feeling is nature; thus nature is the first object of religion."[76] By projecting his feelings to the natural phenomena, man creates his gods and then worship them. Therefore, "To live in projected dream-images is the essence of religion. Religion sacrifices reality to the projected dream: the "Beyond" is merely the "Here" reflected in the mirror of imagination."[77] Guthrie observes, that "Feuerbach also sees religion as anthropomorphism, but his account differs from Hume's. Whereas for Hume religious thought concerns the external world, for Feuerbach it concerns the human self."[78] By promises of better life in the hereafter, argues Feuerbach, religion provides people "an escape mechanism, which prevents men from going after a better life in a straight line. Religion is as bad as opium."[79]

Guthrie observes, that Feuerbach's anthropomorphic interpretations of religion differs "somewhat from those of Vico and Comte. For Feuerbach, it has three causes. As do his predecessors, he believes that one cause is cognitive confusion. Anthropomorphism and hence religion are simple, childish mistakes... Second, anthropomorphism is wishful thinking, motivated by desire... Third, religious anthropomorphism is a means, albeit unwitting, of attaining self-consciousness. Humans were unable to conceive of themselves clearly until they had created their image outside themselves."[80] Guthrie also observes, that "Feuerbach agrees with Scheliermacher that God exists in human experience, but he adds that he exists *only* there. God is nothing but man's experience of himself..."[81] The practical conclusion that Feuerbach draws from his thesis is, "What, therefore, ranks second in religion-namely, Man-that must be proclaimed the first and recognized as the first. If the nature of Man is man's Highest Being, if to be human is his highest existence, then man's love for Man must in practice become the first and highest law. *Homo homini Deus est*-man's God is Man. This is the highest law of ethics. THIS IS THE TURNING POINT OF WORLD HISTORY."[82]

No doubt that Feuerbach's interpretations of the divine and religion proved to be the turning point in the subsequent world history. Karl Marx, following Feuerbach's thesis but replacing Feuerbach's "Man" with "Society and State", declared religion as "the imaginative realization of the human essence, because that essence has no true reality....It is the opium of the people."[83]

In the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin advocated his theory of "Natural Selection" refuting the traditional theistic view of God as the Creator and Designer, and the nature as the manifestation of purposiveness, design, and immutability.[84] This, in the words of American botanist Asa Gray, was "a step decidedly atheistical."[85] Adam Sedwick, a former teacher of Darwin, argued with Darwin, that "It is the crown and glory of organic science that it does, through final cause, link material to moral.... You have ignored this link... you have done your best... to break it. Were it possible (which, thank God, it is not) to break it, humanity, in my mind, would suffer a damage that might brutalize it, and sink the human race into a lower grade of degradation than any into which it has fallen since its written records tell us of its history."[86] Darwin, in his Descent of Man, did argue that "the New World and the Old World monkeys; and from the latter, at a remote period, man the wonder and glory of the Universe proceeded."[87] He emphatically advocated evolutionary theory.[88] Such an interpretation of man and his universe, according to Livingston, "symbolized the final death blow to orthodox metaphysics."[89] It "challenged the very foundations of Christian beliefs. Darwin's interpretation of nature was more damaging to a Christian vision of the world than the revolutions of either Copernicus or Newton... Darwin challenged the entire biblical account of man's unique creation, fall, and need for redemption." [90] Darwin himself pinpointed the outcome: "I had gradually come, by this time, to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world... and from its attributing to God the feelings of a revengeful tyrant, was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of Hindoos, or the beliefs of any barbarian... I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation... Thus disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete."[91] With Darwin's evolutionism, argues John Dillenberger, "Every need for a God as a necessary source of explanation had disappeared."[92]

Evolution, starting with Darwin in biology, became extremely popular in almost all other disciplines. It caused an uproar in the religious circles and it is little wonder that it received a heated response from theologians.[93] Despite all opposition from theologians and others, it became the guiding principle in all leading disciplines of the nineteenth century. This is, perhaps, the reason that empirical scientists, anthropologists, philologists, psychologists, sociologists, and naturalists of the nineteenth century did not look for God in the heavens or beyond this utilitarian sphere. They searched for Him here in their own world either in the nature, or in the human soul,[94] or psychic,[95] or in human society,[96] and finally, all of them almost unanimously, were able to locate Him in human experience[97] i.e., in the mental process by which man acquires ideas and in the impact and influence his emotions and feelings have on him. "We cannot take a step towards constructing an idea of God", argued H. Spencer, "without the ascription of human attributes."[98]

E. B. Tylor (1823-1917) advocated evolutionary/developmental rather degradation theory. Recognizing the survival of earlier cultural elements, Tylor defined them as "processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved."[99] Tylor propounded a plausible theory of "animism",[100] "the conception of human soul is the very *'fons et origo'* of the conception of the spirit and deity in general".[101] Animism, to Tylor, was the primary formation of religious beliefs which developed into modern higher forms of religion. He argued that such a belief stemmed from an effort on the part of man to explain dream experiences and

phenomenon of death. So this was an "attempt at interpretation."[102] He further observed, that "The evidence for the first alternative...seems reasonably strong, and not met by contrary evidence approaching it in force. The animism of the lower tribes...is a system which might quite reasonably exist among mankind, had they never anywhere risen above the savage condition."[103]

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), both agreed with Tylor that "religion is no longer "true" in the literal sense of statements it makes about the world and the gods."[104] They also agreed, that human beings anthropomophize, and religion results from such a process. But they disagreed with Tylor's thesis that religion originated in mere speculation. Freud argued that, "It is not to be supposed that men were inspired to create their first system of the universe by pure speculative curiosity. The practical need for controlling the world around them must have played its part."[105] Therefore, "Animism came to primitive man naturally and as a matter of course... primitive man transposed the structural conditions of his own mind into the external world."[106] It is our responsibility to "ask where the inner force of those doctrines lies and to what it is that they owe their efficacy, independent as it is of recognition by reason."[107] Durkheim thought religion to be a sociological problem, while Freud took it as a psychological problem.[108]

Freud argued, that belief in God and religion was an illusion, a childhood experience of an exalted father-figure, a projection of desires, fears, and sense of helplessness (as has already been seen in Hume and Feuerbach) into cosmos. It is not unreal or lie. It is a reality, but of the unconscious experience of infancy that needed to be decoded by psychoanalysis. Freud differed with the philosophers, poets, and psychologists of the past by giving a new interpretation to the unconscious experience. To Freud, unconscious was the repressed conscious "incapable of conscious."[109] The dynamic content of this unconscious was wishes, desires, and dreams. In his *Interpretation of Dreams,* he defined a wish by "a current in apparatus, issuing from pain [=accumulation of excitation] and striving for pleasure [=diminution of excitation through gratification], we call a wish."[110] Every dream is a wish-fulfillment and a key to understand neurosis. Freud summarized his theory by the following words: "the theory of all psychoneurotic symptoms culminates in the one proposition that they, too, must be conceived as wish-fulfillment of the unconsciousness."[111] He further argued, that the wish and not the speculation or reason are the bases of all psychic activities: "man's judgments of value follow directly his wishes for happiness-that accordingly, they are an attempt to support his illusions with arguments."[112]

Man is surrounded by relentless, unfriendly, and untamed forces of nature: "There are the elements, which seem to mock at all human control: the earth, which quakes and is torn apart and buries all human life and its works; water, which deluges and drowns everything in a turmoil; storms...diseases...and finally there is the painful riddle of death, against which no medicine has yet been found, nor probably will be. With these forces nature rises up against us, majestic, cruel and inexorable; she brings to our mind once more our weakness and helplessness, which we thought to escape through the work of civilization."[113] Chief among these strategies of civilization, is religion: "I have tried to show that religious ideas have arisen from the same need as have all the other achievements of civilization."[114]

When "Life, as it is imposed on us, is too hard for us: it brings us too many hurts, disappointments, insoluble tasks. To endure it, we cannot do without palliatives...."[115] Man's childhood experience provides the clue for that: "Once before one has found oneself in a similar state of helplessness: as a small child, in relation to one's parents. One had reasons to fear them, and especially one's father; and yet one was sure of his protection against the dangers one knew....In the same way, a man makes the forces of nature not only into persons with whom he can associate as he would with his equals-that would not do justice to the overpowering impression which those forces make on him-but he gives them the character of a father."[116] Therefore, God, in reality, is nothing but the reappearance of childhood unconscious experience and the projection of father-figure into the cosmos because "the root of every form of religion", to Freud, is "longing for the father."[117] Again, in *Civilization and Its Discontents,* he elaborated this point contending that "the derivation of religious need from the infant's helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it seems to me incontrovertible, especially since the feeling is not simply prolonged from childhood days, but is permanently sustained by fear of superior power of Fate. I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for father's protection.... The origin of religious attitude can be traced back in clear outlines as far as the feeling of infantile helplesses. There may be something further behind that, but for the present it is wrapped in obscurity."[118] The decisive element of Freudian theory is the substitution of psychology for metaphysics, and as Stan Draenos observed, "The transformation of metaphysics into metapsychology substitutes an immanent `within' for a transcendent 'beyond' as the ground of self-understanding."[119]

Freud, like Durkheim, connected his theory with "totemism" to give it a historical perspective. As J. G. Frazer and Durkheim explained before him[120] that in primitive tribes totem played two vital roles. The totem provided the tribesmen with protection, help, guidance, warning about troubles etc. and the clan members, on their part, respected, revered and protected the totem animal by establishing taboo around him. They strictly observed two laws in connection with the totem: firstly, no killing of the totem animal and secondly, no sex between clan members. Violations of these laws were punished to death.[121] This primitive religious experience was unconscious also "the real reason must be `unconscious'."[122] Freud then connected totemism with psychoanalysis arguing that it was a "product of the conditions involved in the Oedipus complex."[123] He explained this complex with observing that the helpless child when enters the society and knows the limits of his father's abilities and powers and also becomes aware of his sexual desires his attitude towards his father changes and " takes on a hostile coloring and changes into a wish to get rid of the father in order to take his place with the mother."[124] The pre-oedipal identification with father helps repress these feeling: "Clearly the repression of Oedipus complex was not easy task...so the child's ego brought in a reinforcement to help in carrying out the repression by erecting this same obstacle [to realization of the oedipal wish] within itself. The strength to do this was, so to speak, borrowed from the father, and this loan was an extraordinarily momentous act."[125]

Totem, then, was nothing but the substitution for the father. What "is sacred was originally nothing but the perpetuated will of the primeval father."[126] Freud further argued, that this was the ground of first primitive religious thought. Primitive people lived a horde life where the father ruled over the younger males of the group keeping all the females for himself. Other males wishes were repressed by sex restrictions. "One day the brothers who had been driven out came together,

killed and devoured their father, and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. United they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually." Here in this so called historical act, Freud looks for the original clues: "The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers: and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal, which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition and commemoration of so many things-of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion."[127]

The motive Freud wanted to accomplish through his research was to advocate that religion is a reality and enjoys tremendous power and durability because "the store of religious ideas includes not only wish-fulfillments but important historical recollections. This concurrent of past and present must give religion a truly incomparable wealth of power."[128] But still it is an illusion. People of our scientific era should abandon it. "A psychologist who does not deceive himself about the difficulty of finding one's bearings in the world, makes an endeavor to assess the development of man, in the light of the small portion of knowledge he has gained through a study of the mental processes of individuals during their development from child to adult. In so doing, the idea forces itself upon him that religion is comparable to childhood neurosis, and he is optimistic enough to suppose that mankind will surmount this neurotic phase, just as so many children grow out of their similar neurosis."[129] Commenting on Freud's theory, K. Armstrong observes, that to Freud "Religion belonged to the infancy of the human race; it had been a necessary stage in the transition from childhood to maturity. It had promoted ethical values which were essential to society. Now that humanity had come of age, however, it should be left behind. Science, the new *logos,* could take God's place. It could provide a new basis for morality and help us to face our fears. Freud was emphatic about his faith in science, which seemed almost religious in its intensity..."[130]

Sigmund Freud, then, made the comfort theory of anthropomorphism as the clearest source of divine. He reduced the religion to "the feeling of infantile helplesses"[131] and hence a childish, unconscious, or subconscious experience worthy to be discarded when humanity has grown up. Such a perspective of religion and God truly brought revolution in the subsequent history of thought,[132] and God was brought from the heaven to the world of man, here and now, because he was too anthropomorphic.

It is quite evident from the above discussions that in the long battle between followers of religion on the one hand, and philosophers, scientists, empiricists, social scientists, and other skeptics of religion on the other hand, the decisive moment came in the middle of the nineteenth century. The evolutionary scheme of Darwin was applied to the study of developmental stages of religion. Supposing that the idea of divine has its origin in the world of man, many scholars did extensive research to locate the exact source of the origin of the idea of God and religion. Some of the scholars like Father Wilhelm Schmidt and others used their research data to prove original monotheism.[133] But they were a minority in the face of great majority of anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and even some of the so called theologians who contended that origin of religion lied in the simple forms of primitive cultures in animism, fetishism, totemism, developing into higher forms of religious beliefs like polytheism, monolatry, monotheism, and

finally into ethical monotheism of modern religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Despite their differences, they mostly agreed on one point; that God does not have an objective reality of his own. He depends upon human needs, aspirations, and fears for his existence. They had no hesitation whatsoever to assert that the word "God" is nothing but a reification, personification or projection of forces found in the external, internal and social world of man. Talk about God is basically talk about man or, as we have discussed above, in the words of Ludwig Feuerbach "Theology is anthropology".[134]

Such an understanding of the divine continued in the twentieth century. Franz Boas saw most religions as "dogmatized development" of anthropomorphism.[135] Horton made anthropomorphism central to religion.[136] Levy-Strauss argued, that "religion consists in a humanization of natural laws" and in "anthropomorphization of nature."[137] Many other anthropologists argued much the same.[138] In short, anthropomorphism was thought to be, and still is, in the words of R. J. Z. Werblowsky, "central problem" in theology, history of religions, and religious philosophy.[139] E. Bolaji Idowu observed, that anthropomorphism has "always been a concomitant of religion, all religions, every faith. In the purest religion... there can be no way of avoiding anthropomorphism."[140] Guthrie argued that "religion *is* anthropomorphism."[141]

In light of the above observations, when we look at the known faith traditions of the world, we see that anthropomorphism is embedded in the scriptures of almost all of them. Theologians of most of these traditions vainly try hard to eliminate anthropomorphisms from their scriptures, but very often the text of the scripture refuses such a treatment.

It is impossible to discuss all the religious traditions in our limited enterprise. Therefore, we will confine our observations only to the three Semitic religions that claim their origin in Abrahamic faith i.e, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Hebrew Bible shows God "as humanlike both mentally and physically, as befits his proposal to make "man in our image"... and the New Testament gives Him a completely human form, in Jesus."[142] In spite of many efforts on the part of some Jewish scholars and Church Fathers (as we will see later in following chapters), the concept of a "physically humanlike God has persisted."[143] Most Muslims, like their Jewish and Christian friends, always try to avoid anthropomorphisms but the struggle is "chronic as elsewhere."[144] The cause, in the opinion of Gibb and Kramers is "to be found in the Kur'an, which strongly emphasizes the absolute uniqueness of God and yet at the same time plainly describe him in the language of anthropomorphism, giving him a face, eyes and hands and talking of his speaking and sitting."[145]

In view of such pervasive nature of anthropomorphism some theologians like W. J. Duggan call it "indispensable."[146] F. B. Jevons argues, that it "has characterized religion from the beginning [and] characterizes it to the end."[147] Other scholars like Hugo Meynell[148] and Ferre try to defend anthropomorphism and resolve the paradox by analogy, faith or any other possible means to save and advocate the validity of religion. For instance Ferre in his article "In Praise of Anthropomorphism", wishes to re-evaluate this "deep seated antagonism to anthropomorphism in discourse about God, and to offer reasons to praise rather than bury such a speech."[149] He concludes arguing that anthropomorphism not only is "*not necessarily demeaning* religiously to the Most High [that is, we need not think Him mean or pretty, for example] but also is *necessarily*

not avoidable logically if the language of either the believer or the philosopher is not to be emptied of all content."[150] On the other hand, Guthrie observes that "Ferre's praise, however, amounts to admitting once more that if we cannot say anything anthropomorphic about God, we cannot say anything at all... This, however, merely makes a virtue of necessity."[151]

In spite of the pervasiveness and defense on the part of a few scholars, anthropomorphism continues to be an "anathema"[152] stuck to religion as Humphrey Palmer observes. Paul Tillich (1868-1965) seems to be determined to get rid of it. To Tillich, the traditional Christian names for the deity, like Father and Lord, are all too anthropomorphic. Such names make the divinity a perfect heavenly person living above the world.[153] In Tillich's view, the word 'religion' is derogatory,[154] and even the name 'God' is objectionable because it makes the deity an objet amongst other worldly objects, "The concept of a "Personal God" interfering with natural events, or being "an independent cause of natural events", makes God a natural object beside others, an object among others, a being among beings, may be the highest, but nevertheless *a* being. This indeed is not only the destruction of the physical system but even more the destruction of any meaningful idea of God."[155] Tillich, in an effort to avoid anthropomorphism, creates new names for the deity: "Being-itself", "Ground of Being", "the Unconditional", and others are preferable to the term God. Armstrong observes, that to Tillich , "You could not say: "I am now having a special 'religious' experience," since the God which is being precedes and is fundamental to all our emotions of courage, hope and despair. It was not a distinct state with a name of its own but pervaded each one of our normal human experiences. A century earlier Feuerbach had made a similar claim when he had said that God was inseparable from normal human psychology. Now this atheism had been transformed into a new theism."[156]

In short, religion, according to Tillich, is "directedness of the spirit toward the unconditional meaning."[157] "The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God. That depth is what the word god means. And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it, and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation."[158]

Not many scholars or theologians accept Tillich's definition of God. Rene Williamson argues that "Christian God is a person, a living person", whereas Tillich's one is "devoid of color and power... bloodless"; it fails to impress or convince the ordinary believer.[159] David Pailin finds him "tortuous",[160] Gaskin accuses Tillich of a "modern loss of nerve",[161] Donald Crosby finds his terms having an "unsettling ambiguity",[162] and Guthrie observes, that "Trying to eliminate the disease, however, he kills the patient."[163] Guthrie also argues, that "Like birdshot fired at a flock in general, it hits nothing at all. The less anthropomorphic Tillich makes God, the more God becomes incomprehensible."[164]

Many scholars prefer a somewhat anthropomorphic notion of God rather than obscure, unintelligible and non-personal God. Swinburne, for instance, begins his book by observing "By a theist I understand a man who believes that there is a God. By a 'God' he understands something like a person."[165] Brandon,[166] Kai Nielsen,[167] and A. Gallus agree with Karl Jasper that "if religion is demythologized, it is no longer religion."[168] Moshe Greenburg well summarizes the situation: "contemplative thinkers among Jews, Christians, and Moslems have always recognized the

predominance of anthropomorphism as the mode of religious perception and discourse and have declared it an obstacle to true knowledge of God."[169] Finally Guthrie observes: "Most theologians admit that to eliminate anthropomorphism is to eliminate religion. The religion cannot be extricated from anthropomorphism suggests that anthropomorphism is even more than its matrix. Rather, religion looks like anthropomorphism, part and parcel."[170]

On the other hand, religion with such an understanding of God, has been denied by great many scholars, philosophers, and scientists of modern times. In addition to the scientific developments or scientific metaphysics and mechanical interpretation of the nature, such an apathy towards religion can partly be attributed to anthropomorphic nature of the theistic notions of God. W. M. Thackeray, commenting about Thomas De Quincy, Robert Browing, Matthew Arnold, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Emily Bronte, once remarked that they were "a set of people living without God in the world."[171] Jean Paul Sartre (1905-80) rejected God. Maurice Merleau Ponty (1908-61), Albert Camus (1913-60), and Logical Positivists like A. J. Ayer (1910-91),[172] advocated heroic atheism.[173] Ayer argued: "Theism is so confused and the sentences in which `God' appears so incoherent and so incapable of verifiability or falsifiability that to speak of belief or unbelief, faith or unfaith, is logically impossible."[174]

Physicist Steven Weinberg,[175] Astronomer Sandra Faber,[176] Biologists S.E. Luria,[177] paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould,[178] and philosophers like E. D. Klemke,[179] all are happy to live in the world without God. Sandra Faber argues, that "the universe was created out of some natural process, and our appearance in it was totally a natural result of physical laws in our particular portion of it... or what we call our universe. Implicit in the question, I think, is that there is some motive power that has a purpose beyond human existence. I do not believe in that. So I guess ultimately I agree with Weinberg that it is completely pointless from human perspective."[180] Physicist Mar Davis argues: "To answer in the alternative sense really requires you to invoke the principle of God, ... and there is no evidence that He is around, or It is around. On the other hand, that does not mean that you cannot enjoy your life."[181] The Cornell professor of natural history, William Provine, summarizes the position of almost all biologists, and indeed of most of other scientists of our time as well:"Everything proceeds purely by materialistic and mechanistic process.... modern science directly implies that the world is organized strictly in accordance with mechanistic principles. There are no purposive principles whatever in nature. There are no gods and no designing forces that are rationally detectable. The frequently made assertion that modern biology and the assumptions of Judeo-Christian tradition are fully compatible is false."[182] The idea of God as the external agency governing the universe leaves American philosopher Klemke "cold. It would not be mine.... I, for one, am glad that the universe has no meaning, for there is man all the more glorious."[183] What Feuerbach envisioned a century ago is, then, fully accomplished. And finally, Thomas Altizer follows Nietzsche and gives the so called "good news" of God's death arguing: "Only by accepting and even willing the death of God in our experience can we be liberated from a transcendent beyond, an alien beyond which has been emptied and darkened by God's self alienation in Christ."[184] Unlike Altizer, Hamilton does not get mystical at all. His secular man does not need God or any God-shaped holes. His man wants to find his own solutions in the world.[185]

The present situation regarding God and religion is well described by J. Hillis Miller: "The lines of connection between us and God have broken down, or God himself has slipped away from the places where he used to be. He no longer inheres in the world as the force binding together all men and all things. As a result the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seems to many writers a time when God is no more present and not yet again present, and can only be experienced negatively, as a terrifying absence."[186] He further observes, that "The city is the literal representation of the progressive humanization of the world. And where is there room for God in the city? Though it is impossible to tell whether man has excluded God by building the great cities, or whether the cities have been built because God has disappeared, in any case the two go together. Life in the city is the way in which many men have experienced most directly what it means to live without God in the world."[187] There is a strong sense of alienation, isolation, and nihilism among the modern man. In the words of Dostoyevsky, " if there is no God, then everything is permitted."[188] Religious values are not binding. Moral values are not ultimate but quite relative. They are disappearing, at least in the United States of America, with an unprecedented speed. Family values are diminishing in most parts of the developed world. Human beings are almost lost: " We are alienated from God; we have alienated ourselves from nature; we are alienated from our fellow men; and finally, we are alienated from ourselves, the buried life we never seem able to reach. The result is a radical sense of inner nothingness."[189] Still there are God conscious people in the world, but the majority presents the exact picture of what the Qur'ān says: "And be ye not like those who forgot God, and He made them forget themselves."[190]

What has been discussed above alludes to two distinct charges against the theistic understanding of God. The first is that of anthropomorphism. It does not mean a total denial of Gods' existence on their part. It simply means that any material description of God, as the advocates of this charge against religion would contend, is conditioned by and derived from mans' understanding of his own nature. Those since Xenophanes who press this charge maintain that God transcends this material world and is solely different from and utterly unlike human beings; therefore, any description of Him in terms of human nature, no matter how greatly qualified, will distort His perfection and will be worse than no description of Him at all.

The other charge is that of `invention'. The supporters of this charge contend that God is a fiction having no real existence of his own at all. He depends ontologically on human beings as they invent him by a cosmic projection of their nature, characteristics and qualities. Guthrie summarizes these charges as follows: "People who say religion anthropomorphizes usually mean one of two different things: either that it attributes human characteristics to gods or that, in claiming gods exist, it attributes human characteristics to nature. In the former meaning, religion makes gods humanlike at least in crediting them with the capacity for symbolic action. In the latter...religion makes nature humanlike by seeing gods there."[191]

To understand the depth and reality of the charge we need to define the related terms i.e., anthropomorphism and transcendence.

Anthropomorphism:

Anthropomorphism is from Greek 'anthropos' (human being) and 'morphe' (form). As a term it is relatively modern and was attested in the eighteenth century.[192]

A general definition of anthropomorphism could be: "an inveterate tendency to project human qualities into natural phenomena-consciously or not."[193] Or "as the description of non-material, "spiritual" entities in physical, and specifically human, form."[194]

Used in its religious sense, the term denotes a universal human tendency to experience, express and appeal to the divine in human shapes or categories. Anthropomorphism, says Martineau,"denotes the ascription to God of a human form or member."[195] In its wider sense the term has been used to cover attribution of any kind of human characteristics, activities, emotions, or feelings to God. It is also defined as to form "religious concepts and ideas in human terms, in accord with the shapes and metaphors of this world and human experience of it."[196] Essential to anthropomorphism is the description of God and formulation of the concepts pertaining to Him in human forms.

There are two major forms of anthropomorphism. The first, in which appeal is made to physical or corporeal traits of the deity, is called "physical anthropomorphism". The second refers to ascription of human feelings and emotions like love, hate, desire, anger, repentance, and the like to God and is called "mental , psychical or psychological anthropomorphism". It is also called "anthropopathism", a term coined by John Ruskin (1819-1900), from Greek *'anthropos'* (man) and *'pathein'* (suffering).[197] Both these forms allude to the same notion that "the character qualities and function of the deity are derived from human life."[198]

Contrasted to this mood of imagination is that which has been termed as "theriomorphism", a tendency to describe and embody the divine being in forms and categories borrowed wholly or partly from the animal world. But, according to Werblowsky, "the ultimate, residual anthropomorphism, however, is the theistic notion of God as personal, in contrast to an impersonal conception of the divine."[199]

There are two standard explanations given by various scholars in connection with anthropomorphism i.e., the theory of comfort and the theory of familiarity. Guthrie explains that "The familiarity account holds that in order to explain the nonhuman world, we rely on our understanding of ourselves because these are easiest or most reliable. The comfort, or wish fulfillment, account holds that we feel better if we can see the nonhuman world as like ourselves." Each of the above categories have several versions. The familiarity account has two chief versions, which Guthrie calls as "confusion" and "analogy". He further observes, that these versions "are on a continuum. They share the notion that anthropomorphism consists in extending models of what we know to what we do not know. They differ in that the confusion version assumes this extension is involuntary, unconscious, and indiscriminate, while analogy version assumes it is voluntary, conscious, and discriminating."[200] We have already seen examples of confusion theory in Feuerbach, Freud, Spinoza, and Comte, while analogy theory, to various

extents, in Hume and Fontenelle. The religious version of analogy theory was successfully advocated by St. Thomas Aquinas.[201]

The comfort theory is also widespread. It is closely related to the wish-full thinking theory of religion, as we have seen in Feuerbach, and Freud. Freud argues that the human beings humanize nature so that they "can breath freely, can feel at home..."[202] L. White argues that the anthropomorphic philosophy is "wish and will projected from human mind."[203] It "sustained man with illusions [and] provided him with courage, comfort, consolation, and confidence."[204] Each of these theories, Guthrie observes, "has little truth but neither is sufficient."[205] Both have some difficulties.

The charge of anthropomorphism against religion, first[206] brought by Xenophanes of Colophon, in it's original form denoted nothing but ascription to the deity of bodily figure. There was not much consideration given neither by Xenophanes nor by his successors to attribution of intellectual as well as moral attributes and qualities to God that might be akin to the human. Consequently, the Christian apologists like Justin Martyr[207] had been using this charge against pagan religions and polytheism of that time.[208] Latourette observes that these Church Fathers, "excoriated the immoralities ascribed to gods by the current myths, pilloried the follies and inconsistencies in polytheistic worship, and poured scorn on the anthropomorphic conceptions and images of the gods."[209] In the fourth century, anthropomorphism was charged by the orthodox Fathers on a group of African Christians. In the consequent history the charge had been repeatedly made to repudiate various religious traditions because of their conception of God in corporeal terms.[210] The medieval philosophers and theologians like al-Fārābī and Moses Maimonides developed it further so far as to cover various aspects of God's intellectual as well as moral attributes.[211] It never became a serious weapon against God himself or against religion as a whole except after the enlightenment period and it's resulting negative effects on man's attitude towards God. This change of direction, perspective, and emphasis is such a development that is too complex to be traced here; however two factors could be adduced as leading to such a development in the pre-enlightenment period. Firstly, the traditional popular incarnational theology and secondly, the usage of personal pictures of God in popular piety during the pre-enlightenment era.

The empirical scientists and scholars, in their effort to restrict boundaries of the traditional God and influence of the Church, exalted this charge of excessive visual imagery or anthropomorphism and extended it to cover all aspects of God akin, in any sense, to the human. The charge of anthropomorphism was pressed so hard and beyond the limits that it ran out of its bounds and became merely a term of reproach and a vehicle for the expression of dislike. Now, according to Martineau," you can scarcely recognize any quality, however spiritual, as common to the Divine and the human nature, without incurring the imputation of 'anthropomorphism'."[212] A term which "when fastened upon a belief, is apparently supposed to make an end of it for a every one above a 'philistine'."[213] In spite of several modern efforts to avoid such an end to religion, as we have seen above, the situation in our times is almost the same as just mentioned by Martineau.

Incarnation:

Anthropomorphism forms the genus of which 'Incarnation' constitutes a species. God may be described in human categories and shapes without emerging within the representation of a human being "in our image and likeness". But the term "*incarnation*" specifically alludes to the representation of human being as in the image of God. Jacob Neusner defines "incarnation" as "The representation of God in the flesh, as corporeal, consubstantial in emotion and virtue with human beings, and sharing in the modes and means of actions carried out by mortals."[214] This is more likely a definition of the popular concept of incarnation. The idea that God or gods have incarnated in this sense, is quite widespread in the history of religions. "According to Ninian Smart", writes Brian Hebblethwaite, "it constitutes a third, incarnational, strand alongside the numinous and the mystical strands in the religious experience of mankind. The Christian doctrine of Incarnation represents this strand in its most highly developed form. The central Christian doctrine states that God, in one of the modes of his triune being and without in any way ceasing to be God, has revealed himself to mankind for their salvation by coming amongst them as man. The man Jesus is held to be the incarnate Word or Son of God. Taken into God's eternity and glorified at the resurrection, the incarnate one remains for ever the ultimate focus of God-man encounter; for he not only, as God incarnate, mediates God to man, but also, in his perfect humanity, represents man to God."[215]

Such a definition slightly differs from the interpretation of incarnation as understood in popular Christianity. This definition represents a more like intellectual trend in the Christianity rather than popular Christianity where literal rather than metaphorical interpretations are more common. In popular Christianity, God is represented in the person of historical Jesus Christ. He seems to be presented in corporeal forms and is said to be physically suffering for men's sins.[216] We will have the opportunity to discuss the issue at length in chapter 3.

For the time being it can be argued, that whenever God is portrayed in corporeal terms and categories, shown engaged in activities practiced by mortals in the ways and moods mortals do, then we have a case of incarnation over there. There are two possibilities of Gods' incarnation. The first, in which God is told to be manifesting Himself in individuals like king, emperor, *Imām* (spiritual leader) or other human personalities and is a common phenomena in various religious traditions like Hinduism, Greek religions, some traditions of Judaism,[217] and some extreme *Shī'ah* sects of Islamic faith as we will see later in chapter 4. The second type of incarnation is that in which God, or the second person *logos*, is thought, at least in the popular Christianity, to be personally adopting a human mortal personality and living on earth for a specific period of time in history. Such an understanding of the incarnation is unique to Christianity only among the Semitic religions. This most familiar form of incarnation derives from the Christian conviction that the union of divinity and humanity takes place in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and is quite controversial even among the Christians, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

After this introduction, definition, and background of the term anthropomorphism, it is pertinent to briefly discuss the nature of the charge that religion by nature is anthropomorphic, and that being anthropomorphic God has no reality of his own outside the world of man. Before going to the main theme and the crux of the thesis i.e., the study of anthropomorphism and transcendence

in the Bible and the Qur'ān, here we should try to fix some of the boundaries of the charge of anthropomorphism and estimate the grounds of its dislike.

As far as the nature of the problem is concerned, it can be located in the assertion that an attribute, quality, or category simply being present in the human sphere is disqualified for being referred to God. This is too much of a qualification. Its application would devoid God of all meaning and relevance to human sphere.[218] Almighty God, as accepted in almost all theistic traditions, is the source of all beings. Human beings depend upon God for their origin, existence, being, and continuity. It is natural (and is a universal fact) for the humans to have longing for their source of existence and being. To them their personal mode of being is the highest one. Therefore it is natural as well as appropriate to think about the unknown God through whatsoever is certain and known to the human beings, to establish a viable relationship. There is little doubt that the human person has the highest value for human beings (though not the most understood one). So it would not be degrading to ascribe to God personality as the definite perfect Being, absolutely other than the human person by His very nature. Thus personality is the gateway of our knowledge. Human beings, observes John Calvin (1509-1564), "must therefore borrow comparisons from known objects, in order to unable us to understand those which are unknown to us; for God loves very differently from men, that is, more fully and perfectly, and although he surpasses all human affections, yet nothing that is disorderly belongs to him."[219] I.T. Ramsey in his "Religious Language",[220] F. Ferre in his "Basic Modern Philosophy of Religion",[221] J. Macquarrie in his "God-Talk",[222] and many[223] others have developed the thought further to show that these known comparisons or religious images serve as conceptual models, but with some definite qualifiers. I. Ramsey views religious language in terms of "models and qualifiers" that function in "logically odd" ways to stimulate "discernment situations." He observes, that "for the religious man "God" is a key word, an irreducible posit, an ultimate of explanation expressive of the kind of *commitment* he professes. It is to be talked about in terms of the object-language over which it presides, but only when this object-language is qualified; in which case this qualified object-language becomes also currency for the odd *discernment* with which religious *commitment*, when it is not bigotry or fanaticism, will necessarily be associated."[224] Ramsey argues, that "We should expect religious language... to be constructed from object language which has been given appropriately strange qualifications..."[225] This odd object-language have "a distinctive significance, and we might even conclude in the end that odder the language the more it matters to us."[226]

Ramsey further observes that the religious assertion such as "God is loving", "claims that we can model God in terms of "loving" situations; but we also saw that, as it stands, the assertion is logically incomplete in an important way, and that to avoid this incompletion we ought to insert some appropriate qualifiers such as "infinitely" or "all." More correctly, then, we must say: "God is infinitely loving," or "God is all-loving" when we have a qualified model of the kind we have been discussing..."[227] He concludes, that "special positioning can nevertheless be reached from ordinary language, to which words like "love" belong, once this ordinary language has been appropriately qualified, as by the word "infinite." Here then is a method by which not only are problems overcome, but where at every point we plot and map our theological phrases with reference to a characteristically religious situation- one of worship, wonder, awe."[228]

Ferre also argues that "One way of making sense of the logical situation is to consider theistic images in their speculative function as a type of conceptual models."[229] He further argues that "in all logical respects... anthropomorphic theistic imagery can function on its speculative side as a vivid metaphysical model. It can give conceptual definiteness to the ultimate nature of things by picturing all of reality as constituting either creature or Creator, each with specific characteristics; it can suggest patterns and unity in the totality of things in terms of its representation of the various relations between the entities so pictured; and it can give a sense of intelligibility, an aura of meaning and familiarity, by virtue of the appeal to personal purpose, volitional power, and moral principle as the ultimate explanatory categories."[230] He concludes, that "the theistic model, as religious imagery, is a kind of symbolism which may function, for those who adopt it, to overcome the threat of the arbitrary on its valuational side as well as to meet the cognitive challenge of strangeness and disconnection on its theoretical side. This it attempts to do by portraying the best as also most relevant, and thus showing "brute fact" not to be just "brutal" but, rather, to display the propriety that is its final vindication. And so theoretical and practical reason rejoin one another once more, at the upper reaches of the search for understanding."[231] Therefore, to Ferre, "anthropomorphic theistic imagery has a reasonable claim on any who judge the success of ultimate imagery, in part at least, in terms of its capacity to stimulate and sustain valuational fullness in the lives of those who adopt it."[232]

Moreover, historically and ontologically God existed from eternity, long before human beings could speculate about him. The personality of God should have been the origin of human understanding of their own personality. St. Thomas observes: "from the point of view of what the word means it is used primarily of God and derivatively of creatures, for what the word means- the perfection it signifies- flows from God to creature. But from the point of view of our use of the word we apply it first to creatures because we know them first. That...is why it has a way of signifying that is appropriate to creatures."[233] He further observes that on the other hand: "all words used metaphorically of God apply primarily to creatures and secondarily to God. When used of God they signify merely a certain parallelism between God and creature. When we speak metaphorically of a meadow as `smiling' we only mean that it shows its best when it flowers, just as a man shows at his best when he smiles: there is a parallel between them. In the same way, if we speak of God as a `lion' we only mean that, like a lion, he is mighty in his deeds. It is obvious that the meaning of such a word as applied to God depends on and is secondary to the meaning it has when used of creatures."[234] Ralph M. McInerny explains St. Thomas's position on the issue observing that, "The names common to God and creatures, like "being" said of what falls into the various genera, happens to be such that the perfection from which the name is imposed to signify is in each of the things, but according to a scale of greater and lesser perfection, *a magis et minus* which will be revealed in the various *rationes* of the common name. Thus there will be participation *per prius et posterius* or, in the case of the divine names, God will have the perfection *essentialiter,* be one in substance with truth, for example, and creatures will be true *per participationem.*"[235]

The Dutch dogmatician Herman Bavinck observes that "All virtues primarily are in God, and only then in his creature. He possesses them *per essentiam*, those only *per participationem*. The metaphors we are using to describe the divine are true in so far as they rest on the truth of God himself."[236] He further observes, that "God made us theomorphous, we are justified in speaking of

him in an anthropomorphic way."[237] Both St. Thomas as well as Bavinck's observations should be qualified with the claim that God created us theomorphus in a spiritual and moral sense and not in corporeal sense; therefore, we have no choice but to find some common ground and language to have a useful relationship with and experience of the divine, but that experience should be expressed only in a spiritual imagery and not in concrete material or gross corporeal imagery. Only those metaphors or anthropomorphic expressions should be used which do not violate Him being transcendental other, the unique, utterly different from His creatures. Only those phrases of commonly used object-language should be allowed of Him that do not make Him fully resemble His creatures and are appropriate to His exalted majesty. Even then the commonality or sharing ground will be superficial. It would be just to facilitate the communication and in no way or shape absolute. Only in God's case these images, attributes, and names are in absolute form while in the human sphere they are just relative.

If it be so, then, allegation of anthropomorphism in its negative sense regarding expressing God in appropriate human categories and terms for communication purposes, as found in some developed theistic understandings of God, would lose its foundation. Illingworth observes that human's belief " in a personal God, from whatever source it is derived, must obviously be interpreted through his consciousness of his own personality."[238] As man's idea of personality in most cases is derived from and interpreted in terms of man's consciousness of his own personality, all personal, theistic notions of God in a sense would have to be somewhat anthropomorphic and should not be regarded, as Theodore Parker did, as "a phantom of the brain that has no existence independent of ourselves."[239] There are scholars who would disagree with Parker. As a matter of fact, religion by its very nature is somewhat anthropomorphic and even "in its highest and most transcendental effort ... can never escape from anthropomorphism."[240] This anthropomorphic tendency is intrinsic to and connected with human limitations and not with the divine sphere or Being.

The talk about God in appropriate personal terms is very much symbolic and metaphorical in nature. Without tracing the history of this approach, it would suffice to quote St. Thomas Aquinas' (1224-1274) classical position here. He argued: "For God provides for all things according to the kind of things they are. Now we are of the kind to reach the world of intelligence through the world of senses, since all our knowledge takes its rise from sensation. Congenially, then, Holy Scripture delivers spiritual things to us beneath metaphors taken from bodily things."[241] He further observed, that "It seems that no word can be used literally of God. For we have already said that every word used of God is taken from our speech about creatures, as already noted, but such words are used metaphorically of God, as when we call him a 'rock' or a 'lion'. Thus words are used of God metaphorically."[242] He observed that "Some words that signify what has come forth from God to creatures do so in such a way in which that part of the meaning of the word is the imperfect way in which the creatures shares in the divine perfection. Thus it is part of the meaning of 'rock' that it has its being in a merely material way. Such words can be used of God only metaphorically. There are other words, however, that simply means certain perfections without any indication of how these perfections are possessed- words, for example, like 'being', 'good', 'living' and so on. These words can be used literally of God."[243] Their content, then, is established by *analogy*.[244]

Aquinas was preceded in this by the Muslim Aristotelian Avverroes (1126-98), who distinguished between univocal, equivocal, and analogous predication.[245] The former two kinds were rejected by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the third i.e., analogous became a fundamental concept in Christian circles.[246] M. Luther disagreed with Aquinas' interpretation of metaphor, and argued, that when Christ is called a `rock' the old word `rock' gets a completely new sense. Although Luther defended the correlation between God-talk and human experience, between *cognitio dei et hominis,* still he does not seem to deny that God-talk is somewhat symbolic. The example that "Christ is a flower", means to Luther "that Christ is a flower but not "a natural one."[247] J. Calvin (1509-64) seriously worked to show metaphorical nature of the biblical language[248] and tried extensively to explain these metaphors in his commentaries.[249] H. Bavinck,[250] Ian Ramsey,[251] Harry Kuitert,[252] Just van Es,[253] Jenet Soskice,[254] and many others agree to the fact that God-talk is very much symbolic and metaphorical in nature. These "symbolic elements", argues John Macquarrie, "in theological language preserve the mystery and transcendence of God, and acknowledge that he is characterized by an `otherness' that goes beyond the grasp of rational thought. Such symbols are evocative rather than straightforwardly descriptive."[255] Soskice goes that far to argue that not only religious but in all language the distinction between literal and metaphorical is determined by the context and use alone. She observes that "what we call `literal' usage is accustomed usage and that metaphorical usages which begin their careers outside the standard lexicon may gradually become lexicalized."[256]

It is necessary to add a word of caution that the fact that religious language or God-talk is metaphorical in nature should not allow anybody to violate the basic rules of language or spirit of the text itself to invent something which is not really there in the text. The spirit of the text must be maintained. The metaphors should be based upon standard usages of the language,[257]and not upon mere excuses of some subjective agency or unverifiable suppositions. They should be found from within the textual context and not arbitrarily invented to substantiate certain pre-cooked thoughts or claims, or to put something into the scripture which is not really there.

We conclude this part of the discussion with Guthrie, who observes that "there is no religion without relationship, no relationship without significant communication, no significant communication without language, and no language without likeness. For the most rudimentary communication, humans may gesture; but even gesture depends on human likeness such as smiling, frowning, eating, and breathing. In any case, communication requires some commonality in context, in communicative system, and in content. Fully human relationships require language in some form. Any god worth talking about- that is, any god we can talk with- must be at least so like us as to share our language and its context. A shared language already is more than all humans have in common."[258]

Religion, on the other hand, is communicative as Geertz,[259] Bellah[260] and many others agree.[261] M. Buber describes God as one who speaks and communicates, "a God whom men trust because he addresses them by word and calls them."[262] To Buber, "God is the Being that is directly, most nearly, and lastingly, over against us, that may properly only be addressed, not expressed."[263] Swinburne's God is a person and language is fundamental to persons, "persons use language to communicate..."[264] Krasner also pinpoints living and ongoing communication.[265] Even to Feuerbach "the essential act of religion... is prayer."[266] Guthrie gives a detailed account of such a

communicative process.[267] Therefore, there is no choice for religious believers as well as the scriptures but to be communicative. And for the communication to be meaningful and appropriate to the profundity of religious experience, it has to be personal and hence somewhat anthropomorphic.

Although scientists starting with Bacon[268] have always disliked anthropomorphisms and have always tried to minimize it if not possibly eliminate it, anthropomorphism in this minor sense is intrinsic to all human achievements and endeavors including science and philosophy.[269] Philosophers of science like E. Thomas Lawson,[270] scholars of religion like Robert McCauley,[271] and sociologists of science like Barry Barnes, all argue that science is the "most elaborated and systematized of all forms of knowledge, and the least anthropomorphic".[272] On the other hand, primatologist Linda Fedigen observes, that though the fundamental achievement of science is the "realization that we are not the center of, nor the prototype for, all else in the universe, [but] while anthropomorphism is to be avoided or minimized, it will not be eliminated."[273] Philosophers like Percy Nunn argue that the very notion of matter in Physics is anthropomorphic. Anthropomorphism, to Nunn, is "too deeply rooted in human nature to be easily suppressed. The average student of physics to-day is probably still at heart an anthropomorphist. He takes his science to be a hunt after causes [that] convey into the transactions between material bodies features of the traffic between man's mind and his environment."[274] Brightman observes, that "all knowledge-scientific, philosophical, or religious-must be based on human experience and reason; hence, anthropomorphism is unavoidable. The question should be: what kind of anthropomorphism, critical or uncritical?"[275]

Guthrie does a comprehensive survey of various branches of science to conclude that "This survey of philosophy and science, with a brief excursion into space, shows that anthropomorphism occurs even in the most systematically self-critical domains of thought and in the most technical undertakings. The survey may seem to support Nietzsche's claim that it does so fundamentally, intrinsically, and inevitably. However, most philosophers and scientists, and I, agree instead with Bacon that at least egregious anthropomorphism can in principle largely be eliminated and that doing so improves our understanding of the world.... Although philosophers and scientists are the people wariest of anthropomorphism, and though most now regard it as unalloyed error, they are as prone to it as the rest of us. And while modern reflection tends to diminish it, some forms, generally judged inoffensive, survive. Anthropomorphism, then, though fundamental neither to philosophy nor to science, criticized by both and evidently antithetical at least to science, continues to appear in them."[276]

Now, if the religious conception of God is rendered to be anthropomorphic by the scientists and empiricists merely because of the fact that it is limited by the conditions of human personality or controlled by the experience and thoughts which are provided by human personality, then, the world, as A. Balfour puts it, "presented to us by science can no more be perceived or imagined than the Deity as represented to us by Theology."[277] In the words of Martineau, "In every doctrine, therefore, it is still from our microcosm that we have to interpret macrocosm: and from the type of our humanity, as presented in self-knowledge, there is no more escape for the pantheist or materialist, than for the theist. Modify them as you may, all casual conceptions are

born from within, as reflections or reductions of our personal, animal, or physical activity: and the severest science is, in this sense, just as anthropomorphic as the most ideal theology."[278]

Man is at a loss to perceive the deity but in three possible forms i.e., personal, animal, physical, or as Mind, Life, Matter. The only question would be which one of these forms is his choice; whether one construes the deity with his highest attributes and, thus, feels extremely strong feelings of reverence and dependence upon Him, or by the middle qualities which he shares with some other organisms; or by the lowest characteristics that he shares with every physical thing. The first choice will be *'anthropomorphism'*. The second will be *'biomorphism'* or *'zoomorphism'*, and the third *'hylomorphism'* or *'azzoomorphism'*.[279] And 'anthropomorphism', perhaps, will be a better choice than the empiricists choice of *'hylomorphism'* or *'azzomorphism'*. It shall be then, as Farnel puts it, "no rebuke to religion to describe it as anthropomorphic; but we may condemn any particular form of anthropomorphism as narrow or trite or degrading."[280] The degrading anthropomorphisms will be those expressions which are used without proper qualifiers and precautions so as to make God look like a human being or assign to God any thing inappropriate or incompatible with His Infinitude, Majesty, Absoluteness, Perfection, or in other words 'His Otherness and Transcendence'. Due and proper limits must be maintained between what is human and what is Divine. Failing to do so will prove to be degrading to the Deity and will certainly be detrimental to the very nature of religion. Metaphorical or seemingly anthropomorphic expressions should be used to provide human imagination with a kind of modality, but soon the imagination be alerted and precautioned not to go very far because God transcends all human modalities and conceptions and cannot be fully grasped or conceptualized by any material model or figure. He cannot be and must not be reduced to the categories of human thinking and must not be modelled on a blown-up anthropocentrism. He by his very nature is unknown to us in his essence. Therefore none of the above categories of minor or seemingly anthropomorphic expressions, as argues Macquarrie, "can be taken literally. This means that they have to be both affirmed and denied, so that theological language has a paradoxical character."[281] A healthy tension has to be maintained between the affirmation and the denial process of even such a minor expression. Intelligible concepts and models should be developed to articulate and bring home the idea of the creator God, but it must be done so carefully so as not to fall into sheer abstraction or sheer anthropomorphism or corporealism. Both extremes would infringe upon the transcendence and mystery of God. Such extreme notions would fail to reach the depths of human beings and would be at a loss to create proper response, a sense of mystery and ineffability very much essential to the proper man-God relationship.

Transcendence:

Transcendence, on the other hand, is the term most commonly used to signify God's continuous providential guidance to and independence of this material world by emphasizing His apartness from and elevation above this world. R. B. Edwards observes that, "The other-worldliness of supernaturalism rests on this divine attribute. God exists "beyond space" and "before time", since the entire spatiotemporal universe owes its existence to him."[282] Moreover, the term transcendence denotes that God Himself and notions about His existence, Absoluteness, Power and Authority are not this-worldly humanly created conceptions; therefore, they cannot be meaningless and empty terms to be dispensed with, as conceived by empiricists. Contrary to that,

God and His revelation are the fundamental sources and ground of meaningfulness in this world.

The etymology of the word 'Transcendence' shows that it is from the Latin root '*Scando*' which means 'I climb '; when to this root prepositions like *ad, de, and trans* are added we get words as '*ascend*' '*desend*' and '*transcend*'. So the word '*transcend*' would literally mean "something has climbed out of something,"[283] or something has "risen above" and "went beyond" something.[284] This going beyond presupposes two things: a difference between the one which transcends and that which is transcended. It also presupposes a relationship or relevance between them. As a metaphor, the term transcendence has been used to convey a number of varied though related meanings;[285] therefore the precise significance of the term in any particular work would be determined from the context in which it is used. In this enterprise, the term will be used for the God, His uniqueness and otherness, and to denote His unique mode of relationship to the world.

The God transcends the world not in the sense that He is out of the world, but in the sense that "He stands over against all finite being" and is "not identical with or His power not exhausted by the realm of finite being".[286] He is never non-being like the finite beings.[287] The God "transcends structure",[288] the unbreakable necessities, both spatially and temporally, and is free in relation to all of them. To Niebuhr, this freedom of God means that He "is not identifiable with any created structure, nor is he a necessary product of such structure."[289] He cannot be explained or comprehended fully by these structures or, in the words of Tillich, by "the world of polarities and finitude."[290] These finite structures are neither self-sufficient nor self-explaining, while God is self-sufficient as well as self-explaining. He is self-explaining through acts of creation and revelation. Moreover, He is the source of explanation and meaning for the finitude and hence, as the transcendent and unique reference, solves their "problem of meaning."[291] Without such a transcendental reference the human life, as observes Richardson, will be nothing but "meaninglessness and absurdity, a pointless and empty burden silly to be endured."[292]

In short, God's transcendence, to quote Heim, "means that he is not a member of the series, nor is he the series itself, but rather its Lord."[293] He is the creator "who makes finite and relative existence possible...and is the source of all reality."[294] He is the Absolute, the Perfect, the Almighty, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent, the Holy, the Eternal and, as Van Der Leeuw puts it, the "highly exceptional and extremely impressive 'other',[295] the "*Other*" who differs from all that is usual and familiar to this world of senses. He, as Illingworth observes, "sustains all finite beings in existence, or in other words imparts to them all the reality that they posses, while transcending them as immeasurably as the creator ever must transcend the creature. He is our infinite and absolute Other. He is all that what we are not."[296] Consequently, His existence or authority does not depend on our feelings or emotions. He exists independent of the whole material world and is not subject to the limitations of whatsoever is other than Him.

Immanence:

The term "*Immanence*" denotes God's presence in this world and is thought to be the 'polar opposite' of the term transcendence.[297] The word 'immanence' is derived from the Latin base "*manere* meaning to stay or to remain." The addition of the preposition 'in' gives the meaning of '*staying in*' or '*remaining within*'.[298] It is pertinent to notice that what stays in something or

remains within something is distinguishable and distinct from that which it stays in; otherwise, it will merely be a part of the other. Keeping this fact in mind, it can be argued that the term '*Immanence*' is not a polar opposite of the term '*Transcendence*.' In a sense the transcendence of God presupposes a relationship of God with the world He transcends, while necessitating His "otherness" than it. God, as Niebuhr observed, "is certainly in the structures and temporal processes just as the human person is 'in' its organism. But both the human and the divine person posses a freedom over and above the processes and structures."[299] (Freedom, to R. R. Niebuhr, means neither being identifiable nor created by any created structure). So the transcendent God is related to this world of senses as the original and the only source of its creation and existence, as the Creator and the Sustainer. He stays within the world of material and is immanent in every aspect of its existence by means of His eternal power, knowledge, authority, protection, love, and many other infinite and absolute attributes and qualities, but still is wholly 'other' than the world. Therefore, "when, then, we contrast the transcendence, or surpassing nature, with the immanence or indwelling presence of God we are only describing, in our very inadequate human language, two aspects of one and the self-same Being. But they are very different aspects."[300] This is probably the reason that J. R. Illingworth argues that both the transcendence and the immanence are "not alternatives but correlatives."[301] Each of them has some elements of the other.

Such a theistic understanding of the 'Transcendence' is the pivot around which Semitic religions i.e., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam exist. The belief in such a transcendent God sinks deep into the personalities of those who believe in Him and shapes their whole life.[302] This belief is not something they can keep to themselves; there is a kind of compulsiveness behind it; urgency is of the essence of it. All the activities of true believers seemed to be molded into and dictated by the particular kind of belief they posses in regard to the 'Transcendent' because, to them, He is the sole and the only source of their very existence, the One Unified, Perfect being that, though distinct from the cosmos, is the source of it, and continues to sustain and providentially guide it. Interestingly enough, the approaches adopted by the followers of these Semitic traditions regarding anthropomorphic and corporeal depictions of this "Transcendent" God are different to certain degrees. The Jewish Scripture (the Hebrew Bible) is inundated with anthropomorphic expressions and depictions of God, though the medieval Jewish theologians and philosophers like Saadia ibn Joseph (Saadia Gaon) (882-942), M. Maimonides (1135-1204), and many modern scholars of our times, have been trying to eliminate or at least minimize these scriptural anthropomorphisms by various methods of interpretation. On the other hand, the pervasiveness of anthropomorphism in the Hebrew Bible makes such intellectual attempts superficial. The Christianity's dogma of the person of Christ and "Incarnation" is also anthropomorphic. In spite of ample emphasis in the Christian tradition upon the transcendence of God and His uniqueness, the presence of dogmas like "Incarnation" and frequent usage of the expressions like the Father, Son, God in human form, God on earth, Mother of God, the face and hands of God etc., leaves tinges of corporealism in the human mind. What will follow is a detailed discussion of the transcendental and anthropomorphic tendencies in the Bible (with its two constituent parts i.e., the Old Testament and the New Testament) and the Qur'ān, but before turning to such a discussion, let us briefly define also philosophical perspective of transcendence.

Transcendence; Philosophical:

The above discussed religious concept of `Transcendence' is different from philosophers interpretation of it. Their notion of transcendence stands in sharp contrast to their concept of the divine immanence. They, in their efforts to press Gods' unity and oneness and to purify His being from all human attributes or characteristics, go so far as to cut all His relationship with, and, in some cases, direct authority over this world of perception. This extreme notion of transcendence, starting from Pythagoreans and Platonists[303] and permeating through Philo and Neo-Platonists to a great number of philosophers and theologians from all three traditions, identifies God with that source of divine reality from whom all other realities emanate wittingly or unwittingly as the light emanates from the sun.

To Plato this world and what it contains is just nothing but a copy of the "Ideas" in a higher sphere. Behind these `Ideas' in higher realm is the "Ultimate Idea", and that is the Idea of Good.[304] Speusippus, the successor of Plato as the head of the Old Academy, developed Platos' philosophy of Ideas into "the notion of the absolute transcendence of the supreme First Principle."[305] It was Philo,[306] a Jewish theologian and philosopher of Alexandria, who incorporated this emphatic doctrine of divine transcendence into religious theology to avoid anthropomorphic notion of deity presented by the scriptures and to insist on man's total inability to perceive God's essence. The limitations of this enterprise do not allow us to discuss further details.[307]

In what follows we will discuss anthropomorphism and transcendence in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Qur'ān.

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2

Transcendental And Anthropomorphic Tendencies In The Hebrew Bible

The understanding of God distinctive to the Hebrew Bible and hence to Jewish tradition is an amalgamation of anthropomorphic and transcendental tendencies. God, in the ancient biblical period, is presented in manifest anthropomorphic terms, qualities and attributes. Henotheism could be the best term to denote patriarchal understanding of God. Monolatry or Mono-Yahwism replaces henotheism with the arrival of Moses who at the same time seems to be sowing the seeds of biblical monotheism although not in the strict sense of the term. His Yahweh is jealous though his universe is not free from the existence of other gods. Moreover, his Yahweh is not free from anthropomorphic attributes, qualities and seems to be boldly presented in anthropomorphic as well as physical terms. Anthropomorphic tendency is quite visible even in the later Prophets who champion strict monotheism and offer vehement opposition to idolatry and graven images. Their God is not presented in crude material terms, but is still visibly corporeal and anthropomorphic i.e., a reflection of the idea that God created man in His own image. The history of God in the Hebrew Bible seems to be progressive and anthropomorphic tendencies are reflected throughout this progressive process. The Hebrew Bible itself is the best witness to this claim, so we turn to it for the proof.

The Bible; An Introduction:

The Holy Bible is perhaps the most read, distributed and discussed book in the world. It has been a force, molding, shaping and reshaping millions of human lives and thoughts into it's own thought patterns. It has been read for nearly two thousand years or more. Some of it's readers have taken it literally and others figuratively or symbolically. Some of them have related themselves to it, and revered it as the fountainhead of their faith and tradition. Others read it as the mighty power which has created or helped create a number of great civilizations and cultures while still others read it to criticize it; therefore, it has been a part and parcel of various human religious, educational, political and social institutions in different capacities since its compilation or canonization centuries ago. So vast is the work connected with it, says Geddes MacGregor, that "even if an international commission were set up with unlimited funds to investigate the work, a complete inventory of it would be impossible."[1] This situation is likely to continue for the

centuries because it is the "Holy Scripture" of millions of human beings who believe that in it, "the voice of God bursts through every cadence and his finger writes between every line."[2] They contend that "there is much reason to prognosticate that it's influence is likely to wane only to the extent that humanity declines into an era of mass slavery and unreflecting barbarism."[3]

The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek "Biblia" which itself is a "translation of the Hebrew Sepharim ("books")-the oldest term for biblical literature."[4] As a general term it can be used for any book venerated as "Sacred" by it's followers but as a specific term "the Bible" it denotes the books which are acknowledged as canonical by the Christian Church.

The Bible consists of two main portions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament of the Christian Bible is the Holy Scripture of the Jews who call it the "Hebrew Bible" or just the Bible rather than Old Testament "since that implies a "new" testament"[5] based on events the Jews believe never happened. H. Greenstein observes, that "The basic sacred text of Judaism is not the "Old Testament". The proper word is simply the Bible, or the Hebrew Bible. The term "Old Testament" is appropriate only for those who believe that the Bible includes a "New Testament" and choose such a distinction to contrast the two major divisions of their sacred text. Since Judaism does not believe in a "New Testament", there is nothing "old" about its only testament. That is why it is fitting to call it simply the Bible."[6] On the other hand, the Hebrew Bible is "traditionally accepted by Jews and Christians alike as having been divinely inspired and as such, authoritative in shaping their respective faiths and practices." [7]

The Hebrew Bible or the Jewish Bible differs from the Old Testament of the Catholic Bible in the number, order of the books and most importantly in excluding the twelve books of Apocrypha which are accepted by the Catholics as canonical and are part of their Bible, however, many Protestants do not treat the Apocryphal works as canonical so in their case the difference from the Hebrew Bible is in the order and number of books.

The Jews divide their Bible into three main categories comprising a total of 39 books: the Law or *Torah*, the Prophets or *Neve'im* and the Writings or *ketuvim*. All these three sections are known collectively as *TaNaK*, which is an acronym derived from a combination of the first letters of each section in their Hebrew terminology (*Torah, Neve'im, and Ketuvim*). The Law or Torah comprises the *Chumash* (five) or the *Pentateuch*, the five "Books of Moses": Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The "Prophets" fall into two further subdivisions: the "Former Prophets" (four historical books) comprising Joshua, Judges, Samuel (I & II) and Kings (I & II) and the "Latter Prophets" comprising Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and "The Books of the Twelve Prophets": Hosea, Nahum, Joel, Habakkuk, Amos, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Haggai, Jonah, Zechariah, Micah, Malachi.

The third section "Writing" or "*Hagiographa*" contains the rest of the books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles (I & II) Daniel, Ruth and Esther.[8]

This threefold division of the Hebrew Bible is "simply a matter of historical development and does not, in essence, represent a classification of books according to topical or stylistic categories."[9] It is frequently believed to correspond to the three historical stages during which these books received canonical recognition.[10] Although all three parts of the Scriptures were believed to be inspired and, as observes G. Foot Moore, "had the verity and authorship of the word of God",[11] their significance and authority was determined by their respective positions in this tripartite division. Since the Pentateuch with it's author Moses was thought to be the fountainhead of the rest of books, then "the prophets are transmitters of a continuous tradition beginning with Moses; the Prophets and the Hagiographa explain the Pentateuch. Thus all the rest of books, with no detraction from their divine inspiration and authority, are an authority of the second rank; they repeat, reinforce, amplify, and explain the Law, but are never independent of it."[12] In view of this conspicuous position of the Torah it is pertinent to discuss the status and authority of the "Law" or "Pentateuch" in Jewish tradition.

The "Law" Or The "Torah", Significance And Authority:

The term "Torah" separates the Pentateuch from the other two sections of the Hebrew Bible. It means "teaching", "doctrine", or "instruction"[13] and is often used to refer to all the body of laws. The term in a wider sense is also "applied to Scriptures as a whole and to biblical legislation in contradiction to rabbinical enactments."[14]

The Torah is the most important and authoritative book in Jewish faith. It received this recognition from Numbers 8:1 " And the Lord spake unto Moses " and also from Deuteronomy 31:9 " And Moses wrote this law ". (see also Ex. 20:1, 32:16, Lev. 1:1, 4:1, Num. 1:1, 2:1, etc.) In view of it's divine origin and Mosaic authorship,[15] the Torah has been held in great esteem throughout Jewish history. The Rabbinical tradition declared it to exist even prior to it's revelation to Moses. The Torah, the Rabbis said, "existed in heaven not only before God revealed it to Moses, but even before the world was created."[16] It was one of those six or seven things that were created before the creation of any thing in the world and it even " preceded the throne of glory."[17] The "Torah which God had kept by him in heaven for nine hundred and seventy-four generations was a hidden treasure."[18] God consulted the Torah in regard to the creation of the world: "I was the instrument of the Holy One, praised be He." "It is the way of the world that when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not from his own plans but with the advice of an architect. And the architect in turn has blueprints and charts to guide him how to construct the rooms and chambers. So, too, the Holy One, praised be He, was guided by the Torah in creating the world."[19]

It is evident from these quotations that Rabbinic Judaism had a strong belief in the Torah being the preexistent "Word of God" given to Moses in a mode of direct revelation. They also had no doubt whatsoever about the physical Mosaic authorship of the Torah, "And who wrote them? Moses wrote his own book (The Torah) and the sections concerning Balaam and Job."[20] Otto Eissfeldt summarizes the point in the following words: "Moses was from an early date regarded as the compiler, or more correctly as the mediator, of the laws of the Pentateuch which issued from God himself. The name used in the New Testament clearly with reference to the whole Pentateuch-*the Book of Moses*-is certainly to be understood as meaning that Moses was the

compiler of the Pentateuch. Explicit references to this conception may be found in Philo..., in Josephus, and in the Talmud (bab. Baba Batra 14b), where it is said that Moses wrote the five books named after him. Philo and Josephus explicitly attribute to Moses also the conclusion which relates his death.(Deut. xxxiv, 5-12), whereas the Talmud regards this as having been written by Joshua. The Jewish tradition concerning the compilation of the Pentateuch was taken over by the Christian church."[21] In addition to that, the Rabbinic sources contended that God's whole revelation was not comprised in the written Torah but also in the Oral Torah, the Talmud, which Moses received side by side with the Written Torah on Sinai and which was orally carried and conveyed through subsequent generations.[22]

The medieval Jewish scholars maintained the same position *vis-a-vis* the divine provenance of the Torah and the resulting authoritative and binding nature of the Bible in general and the Dual Torah in particular. There is a popular saying about Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) that "from Moses to Moses there was none like Moses".[23] This medieval philosopher argued in his introduction to "Mishna Torah" that, "All the precepts which Moses received on Sinai were given together with their interpretation, as it is said, "And I will give to you the table of stone, and the law, and the commandment "(Ex. 24:12) "The Law" refers to the Written Law: "the commandments" to its interpretation... This commandment refers to that which is called the Oral Law. The whole of the Law was written by Moses, our Teacher, before his death in his own hand."[24] In his letter to Joseph Ibn Gabir, he declared that "the Torah in it's totality has been given to us by the Lord Through Moses."[25] This greatest of Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages formulated "Thirteen Principles" which a Jew must believe in order to be a Jew. The Eighth Fundamental Principle is comprised of the following words: "that the Torah came from God. We are to believe that the whole Torah was given us through Moses, our Teacher, entirely from God. When we call the Torah "God's Word" we speak metaphorically. We do not know exactly how it reached us, but only that it came to us through Moses who acted like a secretary taking dictation. He wrote down the events of the time and the commandments, for which reason he is called "Lawgiver.""[26] To Maimonides, the entire Hebrew Bible was the inerrant Word of God. He argued: "There is no distinction between a verse of Scripture like "The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim" (Gen. 10:6), or "His Wife's name was Mehatable and his concubine was Timna" (Gen. 36:39, 12) and one like "I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:2) or "Hear, O Israel" (Deut. 6:4). All came from God, and all are the Torah of God, perfect, pure, holy, and true. Any one who says Moses wrote some passages on his own is regarded by our sages as an atheist or worst kind of heretic, because he tries to distinguish essence from accident in Torah. Such a heretic claims that some historical passages or stories are trivial inventions of Moses and not Divine Revelation."[27]

These words are so clear and forceful as to speak for themselves. Jews in the Middle Ages had a strong belief in the divine origin and Mosaic authorship of the entire Torah and in it's infallibility, immutability, and eternity. This "Law would neither be abolished nor changed or substituted for some thing other than it,"[28] was their axiom. Their belief in its infallibility, supernatural origin and permanent credibility was so deep in the hearts of medieval Jewish scholars that they closed all the doors and denied all the possibilities of progressive revelation. They held with Maimonides that "it will neither be abrogated nor superseded, neither supplemented nor abridged. Never shall it be supplanted by another divine revelation containing positive and negative duties."[29] They also

maintained, as Maimonides observed, that "To the Torah, Oral and Written, nothing must be added nor any thing taken from it." [30]

This view was maintained by the Jews till the "beginning of our era"[31] Even in the present day world of scientific naturalism and cosmic pessimism, this is what a reformed Jew says about the significance of the Torah, "The teachings of the Torah are the most sacred legacy and inspiration of the Jewish people. They are so fundamental that they are recited in public reading every week of every year. The five books are divided into segments or portions, one of which is to be read on each successive Sabbath. Usually, the first words of each portion are chosen as the title, so that every week of the Jewish year can be identified by its Torah portion....since no object in Jewish life is more precious than a Torah."[32] He further informs that "A Torah can never be deliberately destroyed. If it becomes too brittle or too fragile to use, it is buried in the earth just like a deceased person." [33]

Though voices against such a literal view of the Torah have included Christian scholars like Clementine Homilies, St. Jerome and Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. c. 428)[34] and some Jewish scholars like Isaac ibn Yashush, Rashi, David Kimhi and Abraham ibn Ezra (d. 1167) in the twelfth century,[35] continuing with Carlstadt, Andreas Masius (1574) in the sixteenth and Isaac de la Payrere (1655) and Richard Simon, Thomas Hobbes and then Spinoza in the seventeenth century, it was only in the age of "Reason" in the eighteenth century "with Kant's divorce of the "phenomenal" and "noumenal" worlds, that the stage was set for that loss of the authority of an inspired Scripture and of a sense of the transcendent in general, which dominated most of the succeeding centuries."[36]

Finally it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth century that biblical scholars like Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) were able to analyze, oppose and finally shatter the idea of divine and supernatural origin of the Torah and Mosaic authorship of it.[37] At present, claims R. E. Friedman, "there is hardly a biblical scholar in the world actively working on the problem who would claim that the Five Books of Moses were written by Moses-or by any one person."[38]

Contemporary Jews And The Authority Of Torah:

Though significant results were achieved by the above mentioned scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries yet no body attempted to differentiate clearly between various component parts of the Pentateuch. It started with H. B. Witter whose "*Jura Israelitarum in Palastinam*" appeared in 1711. He pointed out usage of different divine names in the Book of Genesis. Jean Astruc (born in 1684) identified these sources as the one which used the divine name "Elohim" and the other which used the divine name "Jehovah". Eichhorn by his "*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*" (first edition 1780-3) proved that there existed two main strands and hence two sources for the ancient writings. English scholar Alexander Geddes and German scholar J. S. Vater developed "*the fragment hypothesis*" picturing the Pentateuch as a collection of fragments. Hupfeld in his book "*Die Qullen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung*" inaugurated a new phase in the history of Pentateuchal criticism. He identified three narrative strands in the Pentateuch.

As a result of biblical scholar Wilhelm Vatke's " *Die Religion des Alten Testament I* (1835) and Karl H. Graf's "*Die geschichtlichen Bucher des Alten Testaments* (1866), two independent research works, an historical or documentary hypothesis about the different sources of the Pentateuch came into the limelight. Vatke sought to trace from the biblical narration the historical development of the ancient Hebrew religion while Graf worked on the text itself as to find which of the texts must have preceded or followed others. They identified four different source documents; J (the document associated with the divine name Yahweh or Jehovah), E (the one associated with Elohim, the Hebrew word for God), P (the passages emphasizing the legal aspects and the functions of priests), D (the source responsible for composing the book of Deuteronomy). J. Wellhausen combined the research of his predecessors and propounded the "Documentary Hypothesis," which brought a revolution in the field of biblical research in general and in Pentateuch studies in particular.[39] Since then most critics of the Pentateuch argue that it is a composite work produced at different intervals, with contradictions, inconsistencies and different literary styles, hence it cannot be the work of one individual (Moses) as had been claimed for centuries. Opposition to the critical study or examination of the Bible comes from the Church as well as the Jews, but the new scholarship had its impact on followers of both religions resulting in schism with respect to the authority of the Torah. At present there are three main groups among the Jews, each having a different view about the authority of the Torah.

Reformed Or Progressive Judaism:

Reformed Judaism, which appeared in the nineteenth century Germany, recognizes the validity of the critical study of the Bible and accepts the picture of the Torah or Pentateuch which has emerged as a result of modern historical and critical research and investigations. The movement of Reformed Judaism can be further divided into two main categories: the "Classical" and the "Radical". The Classical Reform movement does not dispense with the traditional concept of the Torah altogether. These reformers attempt to reinterpret and adapt it to new requirements, " The emphasize at the outset was on adaptability, not on total rejection. The early Reformers understood very well that Jewish law was central to Jewish life. They acknowledged the need to discontinue the observance of antiquated commandments, but they staunchly defended the necessity of the legal process in determining Jewish belief and practice."[40]

The Classical Reform ended in 1881 when the radical trends in the movement got a chance to dominate it. The outcome, the Radical Reform Judaism, observes Kaplan, "practically dispenses with the concept of "Torah"."[41] They have lost faith in the divine origin of the Torah. In the words of M. M. Kaplan, one of the pioneers of modern Jewish thought, "with critical and historical research proving that the Pentateuch is a composite document which began to function as a single code not earlier than in the days of Ezra, the laws and institutions contained in the Pentateuch are deprived at one blow of the infallibility and permanent validity which traditional Judaism was wont to ascribe to them.[42]

Contrary to the traditional view, Radical Reformers give more importance to Jewish history, the Jewish people, Jewish civilization, and see Judaism as a "constantly evolving organism"[43] rather than some thing revealed and static. Judaism, observes J. Neusner, "has a history, that history is single and unitary; and it has always been leading to its present outcome: Reformed Judaism."[44]

This means that "the origin of the reliable definition of Judaism lies not in revealed records of God's will but in human accounts of humanity's works."[45]

For Radical Reformed Judaism the source of religious authority, as observes Danzger, is "the ethical and universalistic teachings of the prophets. Because conscience is a reflection of the Godhead for Reform, the ultimate authority is man's own conscience, guided by the moral and ethical teachings of the Bible."[46] That is perhaps the reason that the Reformers are more concerned with philosophy than the Torah. Even the term "Torah" is missing from their vocabulary. This is evident from the language used in the historic Pittsburgh platform which declares: "We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only its moral laws and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization... We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regular diet, priestly purity, and dress... Their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation."[47] One can not imagine a more forthright declaration to the age to refute or transform the authority of Written as well Oral Torah.
Commenting on this revolution, Greenstein observes that , "the principle of earlier Reform had been a commitment to evolution in Jewish law, not revolution. Classical Reform tried to adapt Jewish law to new conditions while still retaining the principle. The Pittsburgh Platform abandoned that effort altogether. Halakah, the Hebrew word for "Jewish law," disappeared from Reform vocabulary."[48] This trend continued in Reform circles till early 1930s. In 1930 the Columbus Platform replaced the Pittsburgh Platform. It emphasized the evolution and not revolution in the Jewish law and life. It renewed the approach of Classical Reformers *vis-a-vis* the Torah and continues to be popular among Reformed Jews today.

Orthodox Or Traditional Judaism:

Orthodox Judaism, contrary to a popular impression about it, is not a monolithic movement. Orthodoxy spans a range of complexity in regards to beliefs, customs, practices and political views; however, there is one thing common among them. The Orthodox do not see Judaism as a constantly changing organism or as human. They believe that the Torah was revealed on Sinai and is supernatural and eternal. It is in no way man made and subject to change. Jacob Neusner, defines orthodoxy as "all Jews who believe that God revealed the dual Torah at Sinai, and that Jews must carry out the requirements of Jewish law contained in the Torah as interpreted by the sages through time."[49] Therefore, Orthodox or traditionalists are in line with the position held by the generality of Jewry at large for centuries. They maintain that the Torah is the word of God and by definition truth itself. They further maintain that the Torah "being given by God, must carry meaning in every word and not even one letter can be superfluous. One may not understand everything, but that is human shortcoming. If modern scientific knowledge appears to contradict the biblical word, then either our present-day science will prove to be in error or we do no understand the Bible properly."[50] So to them the Torah constitutes facts that are divinely oriented and above all doubt. As the facts of nature leave no room for any kind of doubt, so does the Torah. This view of the essential facticity, observes Neusner, or "the absolute givenness of Torah led to the further conviction that human beings may not deny the Torah's teachings even when

they do not grasp its meaning. Wisdom is contained within the Torah: God's will is to be found there."[51] In short the religious authority in orthodoxy is the Written as well as Oral Torah (Talmud) along with the subsequent rabbinic traditions and not (as in Reformed Judaism) the history of the Jewish people. Greenstein observes that "in more recent times, this appeal to authenticity through traditional sources has persuaded portions of Orthodox community to define its theological stance as "Torah-true" Judaism. They perceive themselves as guardians of the Torah and its commandments with the duty to preserve them and follow them regardless of changing times or circumstances."[52]

Conservative Judaism:

Conservative Judaism[53] is a "counter-Reform" movement and is a mixture of both the above discussed views. Conservative Jews maintain their belief in revealed nature of the Dual Torah, but do not seal the door of revelation with the rabbinical period. They believe in a continuity of revelation in Jewish tradition. This middle position espouses both the previous views as it holds that God revealed the written Torah, which was supplemented by "the ongoing revelation manifesting itself throughout history in the spirit of the Jewish people."[54]

To the Conservatives, the Jewish tradition- its culture, customs, the practices, and value schemes of Jewish people are quite significant. They believe that "Judaism is a tradition that includes not only the Torah., the Talmud, and the Codes, but also the practices of Jews, the traditions of "catholic Israel," the entire "civilization of Judaism."[55] Robert Gordis summarizes the fundamental postulates of Conservative Judaism in the following words: "The maintenance of the twin principles of authority and development in Jewish law... together with the emphasis upon the worldwide peoplehood of Israel-these are the basic postulates of Conservative Judaism."[56] This emphasis upon the catholic Israel does not imply lack of faith in the Torah. The Torah to the Conservatives is the word of God and divinely inspired. Such a strong faith in the validity of the Torah is clear from the words of Isaac Leeser, `the founder of Conservatism' in the United States. He wrote in the preface to his English version of the Bible, "the translator believes in the Scriptures as they have been handed down to us, as also in the truth and authenticity of prophecies and their literal fulfillment."[57] Conservatives would allow application of biblical criticism to the Hebrew Bible with the exception of the Pentateuch. Morris Raphall, for instance, "differentiated between the Five Books of Moses and the rest of the Scriptures. It was not possible, he believed, to apply the same measure of analysis to both. Whoever undertook the criticism of the Pentateuch, would touch the basis of Judaism."[58]

In light of the above discussion, it may be asserted that although modern biblical criticism has left its traces in and imprint on the modern Jewish thought and has caused some of the Jews to revise their faith in the supernatural origin and binding nature of the Torah, many Jews maintain a strong belief in the divine origin and nature of the Torah. They believe in its essential facticity and venerate it as the true "word of God". In case of the Orthodox, the Torah is the inerrant and infallible Word of God in its literal sense. None of the Jewish groups, even Reformism in its radical form, has rejected its validity altogether. The phrase, all Scripture (Written + Oral), only Five Books of Moses, not five books of Moses in its entirety, but just the beliefs along with the ethical and moral teachings, will, perhaps, be fitting to convey the position regarding Torah of the

traditionalists, conservatives and reformists consecutively. Therefore, if a student intends to learn about and compare the authentic Jewish concept of God, or the transcendence or anthropomorphism with their counterparts in other traditions, he would have no choice but to go to the Hebrew Bible in general and the Five books of Moses in particular because the Torah, whatsoever may be the claims and findings of the modern research, enjoys authoritative and authentic status among Jewry at large. This assertion may be substantiated by the words of one of the best known Conservative Jewish scholars, Kohut, who observes, "to us the Pentateuch is *noli me tangere!* Hands off! We disclaim all honour of handling the sharp knife which cuts the Bible into a thousand pieces."[59]

Old Testament And Christianity:

The Christian Scriptures consist in two Testaments, Old and New. The Old Testament has been an intrinsic part of Christianity since the very beginning of this faith. J. Pelikan observes that "the Christian movement was born with a Bible in its hand: the Hebrew Scripture that constituted the Bible of Judaism."[60] Brunner argues that "from the beginning the Christian Church possessed a Sacred Scripture which had absolute canonical authority: the Old Testament."[61] The Holy book, then, for Jesus as well as for the early founders of the Christian faith was not the New Testament but "the Holy Scripture for Jesus and the early Christians was the Hebrew Bible of the Jewish community."[62] Though perhaps we should qualify this by noting that New Testament and Early Church quotations from the Old Testament seem to have been almost always made from the Greek Septuagint and therefore the Bible for the first Christians also included the apocrypha which was almost invariably in all Christian Bibles until the Protestant Reformation. Since the New Testament books, observes Grant, "which reflect the life of early Christians are written exclusively in Greek, it is not surprising that most of the Old Testament quotations in them are derived from the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint; but some times, for example in the Gospel of Matthew, some of the quotations seem to be based on different renderings of the Hebrew text. Recent archaeological discoveries have shown that the Septuagint was in circulation even in Palestine, and that its text was somewhat different from that found in the major, later manuscripts. Undoubtedly the Palestinian Greek manuscripts underwent a good deal of correction on the ground of comparison with Hebrew texts, and it may be that New Testament passages which seem to be closer to the Hebrew than to the Septuagint are based on corrected Septuagint texts."[63]

We can conclude with Clarke who observes: "We are so accustomed to the New Testament as a book of unique authority in the Church that it is difficult to realize that there was a time when the Scriptures meant to Christians our Old Testament."[64] The Old Testament derived its authority also from the notion that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."[65] Jesus is reported by John to have said: "Search the scriptures... and they are they which testify of me."[66]

The Old Testament enjoyed this authoritative status even when the need was felt to add to it the Christian Gospels which, Pelikan claims, "were the first Christian books to be added to the canon of Hebrew Scripture as supplementary Scripture."[67] The rest of the books of the New Testament followed but, as observes Brunner, "until the fourth century the range of the New Testament

Canon was not always and every where the same."[68] We will have the opportunity to address the issue of The New Testament canon at length in the next chapter. It suffices to note here that for all these long centuries of the formative period of the Christian faith it was the Hebrew Bible and not the New Testament which was fully in the Canon. Some of the New Testament books got their place in the canon gradually while the Old Testament books were accepted canonical from the beginning.

Therefore, it is beyond doubt that the Hebrew Scripture was the original Sacred Book of the Christian faith. It, for the first four centuries, remained the only canonical Scripture (before the complete canonization of the New Testament), and has been in the Christian Bible since the Church's canon was first formulated. The question arises about the relationship of the Hebrew Bible with the Christian doctrines and faith. Is the Hebrew Bible in conformity with the Christian doctrines, and is it accepted by all the Christians as authoritative and binding? Could it be that the findings of a student from the text of the Old Testament are equally applicable to the Christian faith as they are to the Jewish one? The answer to these important questions is extremely difficult. It needs a thorough discussion of Christian responses to the Old Testament. An impression of what some of the Christians feel about this complex situation can be construed from John Bright: "The Old Testament... is different. It was not in the first instance a document of the Christian faith at all, but of the faith of Israel. It contains much that is strange to Christian belief and that has never been practiced by Christians, together with not a little that may even be offensive to Christian sentiments. How is this ancient book, which presents a religion by no means identical with the Christian religion, to be appealed to by the church as normative over Christian belief and Christian conduct?"[69] Bright further points out what could be offensive to the Christians when he argues that-"there is much in the Old Testament-and it ought frankly to be admitted - that offends the Christian's conscience. Its heroes are not always heroes, and are almost never saints. They lust, they brawl, and commit the grossest immorality; they plot, they kill, or seek to kill. And often enough their conduct receives no whisper of rebuke: it is just recorded. How are the stories of such things in any way a guide for the faith and conduct of the Christian? How shall he learn from them the nature of his God and of the duty that his God requires of him? Many a sincere Christian has, explicitly or tacitly, asked that question. Scarcely a part of the Old Testament is exempt from it. Not even the prophets!"[70] Giving example of the well known story of David and Bethsheba, Bright further argues that "it is an altogether sordid tale of lust, adultery, treachery, and murder, and many a reader has been shocked by it. How can such a story possibly be said to speak any authoritative word to the Christian with regard to his faith, or in any way furnish guidance for his conduct? Certainly it provides him with no example to follow- unless it be an example of what he ought under no circumstances to do."[71]

In view of such a complex situation one is absolutely justified in asking the question, in what sense is the Old Testament authoritative for Christians in matters of faith and practice? Do Christians differentiate between the two Testaments and assign the Old Testament a position second in rank to the position and authority of the New? And if what the Old Testament comprises was not and is not identical to the Christian faith and cannot work as the fountainhead of its doctrines, why was it and why is it a part of the Bible accepted by the Church as the legitimate authority in the matters of faith and practice?[72] Why are the pastors and evangelists of modern times reading and quoting the Old Testament in their sermons and services?

The Christian response to these significant questions can be classified in three main categories.

The Marcionist Response:

`Get rid of the Old Testament' was the solution typified by Marcion (around 140). Marcion (100-160), the son of a Christian bishop in *Pontus,*[73] found the Old Testament absolutely different from the Christian faith; therefore he completely separated the two Testaments in his canon. Marcion, observes Grant, "believed that the earliest apostles had distorted the original tradition in order to make it relevant to their earliest hearers."[74] His canon consisted of the *Gospel* (Luke, without interpolations) and *Apostle* (Paul, without interpolations and without the Pastoral Epistles). He is classified by some as "a Gnostic and an extreme dualist",[75] while others, disputing the degree to which he was influenced by Gnosticism, do accept that his systematic effort to justify the devaluation of Hebrew Scripture was an outcome of Gnostic teachings that swept over the ancient world.[76]

Marcion "assumed the existence of two gods-one the God of the Old Testament, the Creator, whom he called the Just God, Who is angry and jealous and punishes; the other, the kind God, who took pity on mankind and sent his Son to succour them. The Just God being jealous caused the crucifixion. But Jesus, being delivered by the good God, demanded satisfaction from the Just God, and in payment was given the souls of all who should believe on Him."[77] Christ, then, was sent by the true God to redeem humanity from the cruel and vindictive God of the Old Testament. Carmichael observes that the "redemption in Christ was to him in no way to be understood in terms of Judaism or the Scriptures of Judaism, in which he found much to offend him. The God of the Old Testament is another and inferior being, the Demiurge-creator, the vindictive God of the law, wholly opposed to the Gracious God revealed in the Gospel."[78] Marcion redemption meant redemption from the Law (the Old Testament).[79] He had no reservation in declaring that as the book of a different and hostile god the Old Testament "is no part of the Christian revelation and has no place in the Christian Canon."[80]

Marcion further maintained that both Jesus and Paul had the same views about the Old Testament, but their teachings had been corrupted by the apostles.[81] Marcion's radical views were well accepted among his followers. The Church, on the other hand, rejected his views and declared him a heretic because, in the words of Irenaeus, "he persuaded his disciples that he was more trustworthy than the apostles who transmitted the gospel."[82]

Though the Christian Church roundly rejected this solution and persecuted Marcion's followers, his teachings, observes Clarke, "maintained their corporate existence until the fifth century."[83] In our modern times, a Marcion-like attitude re-emerged in the Liberal period of the late nineteenth century. Goethe, Schelling, Feuerbach and Schleiermacher are just some examples of Christians Marcionite tendencies. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1786-1834), who was accepted as the father of modern Protestant theology (during the nineteenth and about half the twentieth century),[84] made a systematic effort to draw a line and pinpoint the gulf which lies between Old Testament theology and that of the New Testament by placing Old Testament theology on a par with heathenism. He contended that "The relations of Christianity to Judaism and Heathenism are the same, inasmuch

as the transition from either of these to Christianity is a transition to another religion."[85] Though he did not object to the Old Testament being printed in the Bible, he did feel that it should be added to the New Testament as a sort of appendix and not as something of equal rank and authority; "The Old Testament Scriptures do not ... share the normative dignity or the inspiration of the New."[86]

S. Sandmel observes that, "This was a Marcion-like attitude, though it appeared in the nineteenth century. It rested on the premise-at which the Church Fathers would have been aghast-that there was no bond of continuity between Judaism and Christianity. This unsound "scholarship" contrasted , for example, an alleged God of awe and terror in the Tanak, with a kindly and loving God in the New Testament."[87]

The Marcionist strain has survived in Christianity down to the present days.[88] Although people like Friedrich Delitzsch,[89] are accused of Nazism, anti-Semitism, and their views about the Old Testament are often discarded as biased and sick, the views of scholars like A. Harnack, one of the great historians of dogma, are not given the same treatment. Harnack like Marcion "concluded that the Old Testament should be removed from the Christian canon."[90]

The Official Response:

The Church from the very beginning accepted the Old Testament as the "Holy Scripture", the word of God and hence authoritative and canonical. This does not mean that the early Church Fathers were unaware of the problem of incongruity and strangeness inherent in the texts of the two Testaments.[91] For if someone, observes Origen," points out to us the stories of Lot's daughters and their apparently unlawful intercourse with their father, or of Abraham's two wives, or of two sisters who married Jacob, or the two maidservants who increased the number of his sons, what else can we answer than that these are certain mysteries and types of spiritual matters, but that we do not know of what sort they are?"[92] Men like Celsus, Porphyry and others did point out such immoralities and anthropomorpism of the Old Testament.[93] They pinpointed several such passages to argue about the human aspect of the Hebrew Bible. Chadwick hears in Celsus' "onslaught the echoes of Marcion's attack upon the Old Testament, and in fact there is direct evidence that Celsus must have been familiar with some of the arguments used in the debate between Marcion and the Church."[94] The Fathers, on the other hand, could not declare the Old Testament as man made and un-authoritative because they believed, as Origen observed, that "the sacred Scriptures were not composed by any human words but were written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and were also delivered and entrusted to us by the will of God the Father through His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ."[95] So it was the normative Scripture which, as they viewed, Jesus followed and urged others to look as the key to understanding his person. To discard the Old Testament was tantamount to discarding the person of Jesus, an act which would have risked the entire faith; therefore, the Church Fathers retained normativeness of the Old Scriptures by appealing to "allegory" and "typology". [96]

The school of Alexandria in the figures of two of its theologians and philosophers, Clement[97] (155-215 A.D) and Origen (185-254 A.D.), advocated this allegorical recourse which, later on, was adopted by other Fathers like Ambrose and Augustine. Origen saw many difficulties with the

literal textual sense of the Scriptures.[98] He observed: "Now the reason those we have just mentioned have a false understanding of these matters is quite simply that they understand Scripture not according to their spiritual meaning but according to the sound of the letter."[99] According to R. E. Brown "Many of the Church Fathers, e.g., Origen, thought that the literal sense was what the words said independently of the author's intent. Thus were Christ spoken of as "the lion of Judah," the literal sense for these Fathers would be that he was an animal. That is why some of them rejected the literal sense of Scripture."[100] Origen argued that "the law has twofold interpretation, one literal and the other spiritual... It is consistent with this when Paul [2 Cor. 3:6] also says that `the letter kills,' which is the equivalent of literal interpretation; whereas `the spirit gives life' which means the same as the spiritual interpretation."[101] Charles J. Scalise observes that "Though Origen takes Paul's contrast between "the letter and the spirit" and Paul's use of allegory as scriptural points of departure, his view of "the letter and the spirit" dramatically alters the Pauline perspective. For Paul, the "historical pattern" of the Old Testament story is explicitly preserved, even in the few places where an allegorical approach is explicitly used (e.g., the story of Sarah and Hagar in Gal. 4:22-26). For Origen, however, though much of the Scripture is viewed as historical, the historicity of Scripture is itself unimportant; what matters is the spiritual meaning of Scripture developed by the method of allegory."[102] Hanson observes that to Origen "History... is meaningless unless a parable is derived from it, unless it is made into an allegory."[103]

Origen, following Neo-Platonistic tendencies and using a word pattern from Paul (1 Thess. 5:23), introduced his famous[104] threefold distinctive meanings of the Scripture corresponding to the supposed trichotomy of man's nature: body, soul and spirit. First among these, he contended, was "the *somatic*" literal or philological meaning of the text which every body can understand. Second was "the *psychic*" moral or tropological meaning, the existential application of the biblical text to one's own situation, and the third "the *pneumatic*" spiritual or mystical meaning which could be grasped only by those who were mystically perfect.[105] He argued that "all [Scripture] has a spiritual meaning but not all a bodily meaning."[106] He observed that certain passages do not make sense at all if not understood allegorically. "Now what man of intelligence will believe that the first, second, and third day, and evening and the morning existed without the sun, moon, and stars?"[107] Therefore, Origen interpreted them thoroughly and allegorically.[108] Bigg, Wolfson,[109] and J. Danielou argue that Origen derived this method of interpretation from Philo. Bigg observes that "his rules of procedure, his playing with words and numbers and proper names, his boundless extravagance are learned, not from the New Testament, but through Philo from the puerile Rabbinical schools."[110] Grant, on the other hand, argues that it was not "Philonic, but derived from Origen's studies of Greek grammar and rhetoric."[111]

Origen went so far in his allegorism that all Scripture became, as observes Bigg, "transparent beneath his touch; the `crannies in the wall' multiply and widen, till the wall itself disappears."[112] By this "exegetical suicide",[113] as Hanson characterizes it, the Alexandrians, argues Bigg, "found symbols where there was no symbol; they treated symbols not as indications, as harbingers, but as proofs. Thus they undertook to demonstrate Christian doctrine by passages which in the belief of the Jew were not Messianic at all, or, if Messianic, had not been fulfilled. They neglected the difference between before and after."[114] In short they "found in the Old Testament what they already possessed, what they could not have found unless they had possessed it. But at any rate they found nothing more."[115] Through this "dangerous" and "delusive" method, as Bigg

characterizes it,[116] they abandoned too quickly the grammatical and historical sense of the text and the text, argues Scalise, lost "its capacity to exercise hermeneutical control over interpretation through its literal sense."[117]

Origen's and others above discussed allegorism that has been criticized often in the past is being recognized as an achievement by some recent scholars. Blackman,[118] R. Grant, [119] James Wood,[120] Bernard Ramm,[121] Jean Danielou[122] and Mickelsen are just a few examples. Mickelsen, for instance, recognizes it as an "achievement in textual criticism, complete study of the whole scripture, apologetics, and human language in general..."[123]

The school of Antioch represented by Theophilus of Antioch (115-188 A.D.), Diodorus of Tarsus (d. 393 A.D.), Theodor of Mopsuestia (350-428) Chrysostom (354-407) and Theodoret (386-458) was soberer in the use of Scriptures than its rival school of Alexandria.[124] These Antiochian interpreters, observes Mickelsen, "all emphasized historical interpretation; yet this stress was no wooden literalism, for they made full use of typology. The school of Alexandria felt that the literal meaning of the text did not include its metaphorical meaning, but the school of Antioch insisted that the literal meaning cannot exclude metaphor."[125]

These early fathers tried to solve problems raised by Marcion and others by typology and allegory. D. B. Stevick observes that "Insofar as the Fathers recognized problems and discrepancies in the text of Holy Scripture (as many of them did), they seem able to accept some ingenious reconciling explanation or to shift to allegorical exegesis. That is, they would observe the problem passage and then say that the apparent difficulty concealed a mystery: This number stood for one thing; this river was a symbol of something else; and this person was a type of still another thing. Put them together as an allegory, and the problem passage becomes a revelation of great truth."[126]

Other fathers like Jerome (347-419 A.D.) and Augustine (354-430 A.D.) followed Origen in allegorism. Though Jerome in his later life tried to get away from allegory, but did not fully succeed. Farrar observes that "He flatters himself that he succeeded himself in steering safely between the Scylla of allegory and the Charybdis of literalism, whereas in reality his 'multiple sense' and `whole forests of spiritual meanings' are not worth one verse of the original."[127] Augustine, in the name of having sound principles for interpretation, himself allegorized extensively.[128] From 600 to 1200 A.D. allegory, observes Mickelsen, "had a real hold upon the minds of medieval theologians."[129] Brunner observes that "the rank growth of the allegorical method of Biblical exposition made it impossible to maintain the Bible text as normative, as compared with the ecclesiastical development of doctrine." By means of allegorical exposition the Scholastics, says Brunner, "prove", with the help of Scripture, all that they wish to prove."[130] The outcome was, as John Bright puts it, "a wholesale and uncontrolled allegorizing of Scripture, specifically the Old Testament. This did not confine itself to difficult or morally offensive passages, or to passages that tell of something that seems unnatural or improbable, or to places where Scripture contradicts, or seem to contradict, other Scripture; it extended itself almost everywhere. Scarcely a text but yielded hidden and unsuspected riches to the interpreter's ingenuity."[131] By means of this wholesale allegorizing, the Church was able to save the Old Testament as the Sacred Scripture which, according to them, propounded Christian meanings in each of its texts.[132] The Roman Catholic Church, the heir of this tendency, has traditionally been

and still is more inclined and hospitable to the allegorical "mystical" meanings of the text than most Protestants churches.[133]

Many Protestants, following the pattern of Reformers like Luther and Calvin, reject allegory in principle. Luther scolded those who used the allegorical method of interpretation and rejected it altogether.[134] In his "Preface to the Old Testament" he said, " There are some who have little regard for the Old Testament... They think they have enough in the New Testament and assert that only a spiritual sense is to be sought in the Old Testament. Origen, Jerome, and many other distinguished people have held this view. But Christ says in John 5(:39)," "search the Scriptures, for it is they that bear witness to me."[135] He further argues that "The Holy Spirit is the simplest writer and advisor in heaven and on earth. That is why his words could have no more than the one simplest meaning which we call written one, or the literal meaning of the tongue... But one should not therefore say that Scripture of God's Word has more than one meaning."[136] Calvin called allegorical interpretations as an invention of the Devil, some thing "puerile" and "farfetched" meant to undermine the authority of Scripture.[137] By emphasizing the plain historico-philological sense of the text Luther and Calvin emphasized the authority of the Scripture and dispensed with "Tradition" with its accepted mystical meanings. The meanings to which John Bright refers to as "the exotic jungle of fanciful interpretation."[138] Luther gave profoundly Christological interpretations to the Hebrew Bible and urged the Christians to search "Christ and the gospel in the Old Testament."[139]

Since the Reformation period the trend to find Christological as well as typological meanings in the Old Testament has been quite pervasive in influential Protestant circles and is still popular among a number of scholars specially on the continent of Europe and in Great Britain. Karl Barth, Wilhelm Vischer, O. Procksch, A. B. Davidson, R. V. G. Tasker[140] are some of the examples. Vischer, for instance, argues that "the Bible is the Holy Scripture only insofar as it speaks of Christ Jesus."[141] It is the only "dogma which for the Christian binds the testament together; the Old Testament telling us what the Christ is and the New Testament telling us who He is."[142] Procksch maintains this view by contending that "the figure of Jesus Christ has the Old Testament as its background. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies: without him the Old Testament is a torso."[143] Bright argues that "The normative element in the Old Testament, and its abiding authority as the Word of God, rests not in its laws and customs, its institutions and ancient patterns of thinking..., but in that structure of theology which undergirds each of its texts and which is caught up in the New Testament and announced as fulfilled in Jesus Christ."[144]

This approach, though rejecting the allegorical sense and advocating a plain literal or grammmatico-historical meanings of the text seems to do a similar injustice. All these methods supply the Old Testament with meanings and results in advance. The result is that writers merely quote the Old Testament to prove what they think should be proven by it. Somewhat like their Catholic friends, Protestants in the name of finding christological meanings come to the Old Testament with already set ideas and hard and fast assumptions and superimpose these assumptions on the text of the Old Testament, may be consciously disregarding its plain meanings. The practical outcome is the same, a disguised sort of allegory. It is appropriate to mention here that the Protestant approach to the Scriptures has probably caused more confusions and diversity of interpretations than that of the Roman Catholics. In Catholicism the Church is the final

authority to determine the validity of the interpretation. No interpretation can be given to or no meaning can be gotten from the Scriptures that contravenes the Church's dogmas and teachings. In Protestantism, on the other hand, there is individualism. The Protestants shrink from official church-dictated meanings and give every individual Bible reader right to find meanings for himself. This has resulted in such a diversity of biblical interpretations that often it seems like a heap of confusions. The biblical text means simply what it means to the individual interpreter.

The Liberal's Response:

This solution was advocated by liberal theologians during the nineteenth century. They, accepting the validity of Wellhausen's theory of an evolutionary development in the Old Testament, looked at the Bible as a historically conditioned book.[145] They recognized the human aspect of the Bible as a whole. This aspect had largely been ignored by the orthodoxy over the centuries. The liberal writers observed that the Old Testament had evolved from primitive to more developed forms and went through a fundamental change during this developmental process. They accepted the person of Jesus along with his teachings as their point of orientation and looked into the Old Testament from that perspective.[146] As the New Testament is the only record of Jesus and his teachings; therefore, they based their value judgment on the principles of the New Testament. They, by imposing these principles on the Old Testament, separated passages of a normative nature from those of primitive, immoral, outgrown, and non-Christian one's in the Old Testament without denying its authority.[147] A. B. Davidson, for example, argued that "we must neither deny all authority to the Old Testament in favor of the New nor place the Old Testament on the same level as the New ", but study the Old Testament "in view of its climax in the New Testament."[148] E. Sellin maintained that "the Old Testament Canon is significant for the Old Testament theologian only in so far as it was accepted by Jesus and his apostles. That is to say, Old Testament theology is only interested in the line which was fulfilled in the Gospel."[149] F. W. Farrar observed: "Is it not enough that, to us, the test of God's word is the teaching of Him who is the Word of God? Is it not an absolutely plain and simple rule that anything in the Bible which teaches or seems to teach anything which is not in accordance with the love, the gentleness, the truthfulness, the purity of Christ's Gospel, is not God's word to us, however clearly it stands on the Bible page?"[150]

This liberal approach to the Old Testament was unique in the sense that it neither fully followed Marcionism nor the official, traditional solutions. They assimilated thoughts from both the above mentioned tendencies without following any of the tendencies in toto. Their position was and still is quite complicated. They feel like prizing the Old Testament with historical and religious importance while cutting it into thousand pieces, treating some pieces as binding yet the others as insignificant. Such an approach is tantamount to imposing their own authority upon the Old Testament text and determining which of the texts should be religiously significant and which should be ignored as irrelevant. By such an approach, the liberals brought to the modern Christianity "at least the camel's nose of Marcionism".[151] (As mentioned earlier A. Harnack and H. Gunkel are good examples.)[152] Large parts of the Old Testament lost their importance as well as practical authority and the effective liberal canon became a rather small one "the life and teachings of Jesus and such other passages as might be held, from a moral and spiritual point of view, to stand on a level with them, or approximately so."[153]

One is justified to ask, is the Old Testament divinely inspired? If the answer be affirmative, then, it follows logically that it cannot be taken in parts. Either the Old Testament is fully inspired and authoritative in its entirety, or not authoritative at all. Jesus' person and his teachings cannot be taken as the measuring rod to determine the authoritative passages from the non-binding one's in the Old Testament due to historical reasons. The Old Testament existed historically before the person of Jesus. He followed it as the Scripture (as is commonly held) and did not change it or cut it into pieces. On the other hand, the true facts about the historical life and teachings of Jesus are themselves problems of great magnitude as we will see in the next chapter. Therefore, the liberals solution faced problems and limitations very similar to those of the Marcionism and the Orthodoxy. The interpreter's understanding again were to play a vital role in interpreting the accepted passages of the Old Testament. It ultimately lead to individualism and very often to confusions.

It is clear from the above discussion that mainstream Christianity has preserved the Old Testament as sacred, canonical and as an intrinsic and inseparable part of its Holy Scripture. On the other hand, the Christian view of the Old Testament is sharply different from that of the Jews. Christianity regards the Old Testament as "superseded but sacred, while Judaism regards it as sacred and unsuperseded."[154] Theoretically the Old Testament is authoritative and a part of the Holy Scripture of the Christians but practically it is the New Testament which enjoys unitary, undisputed and unsuperseded authority. Christians read, understand, evaluate and explain the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament and as a result accept its validity only to the degree its teachings accord with those of the New. In doing so the modern Christianity does toe the line of early Church Fathers like Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen. These Fathers clearly subordinated the Old Testament to the New Testament since the early part of the second century.[155] One can see similar mixed and confused views about the real significance and authority of the Old Testament in the very early Christian Church. Harnack summarizes the situation then in the following words, "The fact of the New Testament being placed on a level with the Old proved the most effective means of preserving to the latter its canonical authority, which had been so often assailed in the second century....The immediate result of this investigation was not only a theological exposition of the Old Testament, but also a theory which ceased to view the two Testaments as of equal authority and *subordinated* the Old to the New. This result, which can be plainly seen in Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, led to exceedingly important consequences. It gave some degree of insight into statements, hitherto completely unintelligible, in certain New Testament writings, and it caused the Church to reflect upon a question that had as yet been raised only by heretics, viz., what are the marks which distinguished Christianity from the Old Testament religion?"[156] The Early Church, like most Christians of the modern times, could not reject it or accept it completely. They also harbored contradictory views about the old Testament as Harnack observes, "An historical examination imperceptibly arose; but the old notion of the inspiration of the Old Testament confined it to the narrowest limits, and in fact always continued to forbid it; for, as before, appeal was constantly made to the Old Testament as a Christian book which contained all the truths of religion in perfect form. Nevertheless the conception of the Old Testament was here and there full of contradiction." [157]

Authority In Christianity:

In the light of above discussion, it can be observed that a student looking into anthropomorphic and transcendental tendencies in the Bible as a whole may not be doing justice to his Christian readers. The validity of his findings from the Old Testament may not be accepted by a great many Christians as not all of them take the whole Bible as binding. He has to search the New Testament to explore the Christian views concerning anthropomorphism and transcendence because the New Testament alone is the claimed primary authority for most Christians. Would they accept the text of the New Testament as binding then?

1. The Catholic Church maintains that the Scripture does not only contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God and hence final authority. It also maintains that alongside the Scripture, the Church's ongoing tradition,[158] the rule of faith, is also authoritative. The Scripture and the Tradition are "with equal piety and reverence accepted." [159]

The "Tradition" in the past was nothing but the Church or the decisions of the Vatican. No one was allowed to oppose or reject these decisions. It was stated in the Council of Trent in 1546, " No one... shall presume to interpret Sacred Scripture contrary to the sense which Holy Mother Church-to whom it belongs to judge the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture-both held and continues to hold..."[160] This belief found its climax in the dogma of "Papal Infallibility", when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*, reached at the Vatican Council of 1870 "when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*; that is, when in his character of "pastor and doctor of all Christians," he "defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals," he is possessed of infallibility."[161] This doctrine was applied in 1950 to the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary.[162] "When the dogma of Mary's assumption was declared in 1950 ", observes G. C. Berkouwer, "the absence of any reference to it in Scripture was acknowledged. But, it was added, "The Catholic church teaches that there are two sources of revelation from which we can derive divine truth, the written Word of God and unwritten tradition. We know Mary's ascension into heaven through tradition."[163] In modern Catholic theory, the Scripture, the "Tradition" or the Church in the figure of the Pope, all are authorities, but practically it means the Pope or the Church as says Loofs, a responsible theologian of the Vatican, "Neither the Holy Scripture nor the Divine tradition, but the teaching Church, which infallibly expounds both sources of truth ... is for us the first rule of faith.[164]

In recent times, specially after the Second Vatican Council of 1962, this view has been slightly modified to give "a new and strong accent"[165] to the scriptures. As the outcome of this unexpected Council, which according to Berkouwer, "has created unmistakable tensions within the Roman Catholic Church of the twentieth century,"[166] the two sources of authority previously held independent were closely interconnected. "Alike in Scripture and in the "sacred tradition," flowing like a stream from the work and teaching of the first commissioned envoys of Christ, we come face to face with Christ himself. And these two, sacred tradition and the Holy Writ of the Old and New Testament, are, "like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God...until she is brought to see Him as He is, face to face."[167] The 'tradition' is the authentic interpreter of Scripture which is "sufficient for *all* truth."[168] But this "tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit."[169] To fully understand the Scripture, "Christian scholars must be ever mindful of the findings which the Spirit-guided Church

has already achieved, above all, those which the magisterium has guaranteed. This perfect accord with the insights of the Church's living tradition is the best guide that any one can have in studying God's word."[170] In short the final guarantee of correctness and truth lies with the Church as 'The Constitution on Divine Revelation' itself says, "the final guarantee that the development will remain on the foundation of the Scriptures is only the assistance of the Holy Spirit which is promised to the Church and via the Church to its teaching office."[171] The gist of this new theological standpoint is that though the Scripture is all authority but its true interpretation can be done by the tradition and with the help of the Holy Spirit only. And Rome is quite sure it has both of them.

Some observers have rightly observed that though the recent shift is significant it "does not make much difference because a tradition that interprets can very subtly become a tradition that creates truth."[172] It can easily be noticed that although the Scriptures are acknowledged as the final authority in matters of doctrine; in practice it seems just a lip service to the Scriptures. The authority of the Scriptures is closely linked with the `tradition' of which the church is the sole repository. Therefore, the end product is the same; the Church's certain authority over the Scriptures (or at least in effect it seems so). This authority is manifested through the Church's sole right to declare an interpretation of the Scriptures as traditional. The Church's official stamp guarantees the validity of the interpretation and finally assumes binding and authoritative status. [173]

2: One dominant trend in Protestantism, as exemplified for instance in classical Lutheranism, neither gives the Church nor Tradition equal authority with the Scripture. These Protestants do not accept the Church as infallible but following Luther, they subordinate the Church to Scripture in matters of faith. Protestantism, observes John Bright, "has never been willing to accord the church the degree of authority in matters of doctrine that the Roman Catholic Church has. This is probably, indeed, the point which more than any other separates the Protestant from his Roman Catholic brother."[174] The Church, argued Luther, "cannot create articles of faith; she can only recognize and confess them as a slave does the seal of his lord."[175] Calvin, debating the Romanists, argued: "For if the Christian Church has been from the beginning founded on the writings of the prophets and the preaching of the apostles, wherever the doctrine is found, the approbation of it has preceded the formation of Church, since without it the Church itself had never existed."[176] Therefore, "Those persons betray great folly who wish it to be demonstrated to infidels that the Scripture is the Word of God, which can not be known without faith."[177] He concluded: "Let it be considered, then, as an undeniable truth, that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit."[178] To many Protestants of today the Word of God alone in its "Grammatical, historical meaning" or the "meaning of the tongue or of language" in which it is understood by every one, and not the doctrine of the Church, has the ultimate authority.[179] This is what is claimed. In reality, as has already been seen, the authority ends up being in the individual interpreting the Scripture.

Luther himself, in spite of his principle of Verbal Inspiration, made distinctions between different passages of the Scripture, accepting some of them binding and others non-binding. For instance he rejected the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament and described James as a "right straw

Epistle." To him "it is not the Bible that counts but Christ therein contained."[180] Other Reformers like Calvin, on the other hand, seemed to maintain the traditional and authoritative view of the Scripture.

Scholars like C. A. Briggs argue that "the theory of a literal inspiration and inerrancy was not held by the Reformers".[181] On the other hand, Warfield, Brunner, Harris and many others maintain that the Reformers did have the above mentioned literal view about the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Harris remarks that "Most students of the Reformation will be astonished at the suggestion that Calvin believed anything else."[182] Brunner observes: "Calvin is already moving away from Luther toward the doctrine of verbal inspiration. His doctrine of the Bible is entirely the traditional, formally authoritative, view. From the end of the sixteenth century onwards there was no other "principle of Scripture" than this formal authoritarian one. Whatever development took place after this culminated in the most strict and most carefully formulated doctrine of Verbal Inspiration ..."[183]

Presently, the situation, specially in academic circles, is quite different. The "Historical and Literary Criticism" or the "Lower", and "Higher" biblical criticism, as briefly mentioned earlier, has brought about substantial changes in great many biblical scholars attitude towards the scriptures. Starting with Jean Astruc's (1753) discovery of the variation of the divine names in *Genesis,* the hypothesis or the documentary theory was developed and modified by German scholars like Eichorn (1823) and Hupfeld (1853). The higher criticism was given its classical form by Karl H. Graf (1866) and Julius Wellhausen (1876 and 1878). In England this approach found expression through the edited work of Benjamin Jowett "Essays and Reviews" published in February of 1860.[184] In his long essay "On the Interpretation of Scripture" Jowett set his own principles of scriptural interpretation. "Most people", observes Livingston, "considered them outrageous at the time. They were and are open to serious criticism but stand, nevertheless, as a kind of charter for critical biblical scholarship even today."[185]

Jowett's guiding principle was "*Interpret the Scripture like any other book.*" The real meanings of the Scripture were the meanings intended by the author and by the text itself. Jowett argued: "The book itself remains as at the first unchanged amid the changing interpretations of it. The office of the interpreter is not to add another, but to recover the original one: the meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who first heard and read them. He has to transfer himself to another age to imagine that he is a disciple of Christ or Paul; to disengage himself from all that follows. The history of Christendom is nothing to him....All the after thoughts of theology are nothing to him....The greater part of his learning is knowledge of the text itself; he has no delight in voluminous literature which has overgrown it."[186] He further observed that "we have no reason to attribute to the Prophet or Evangelist any second or hidden sense different from that which appears on the surface."[187] He denied infallibility to biblical writers and believed in "*progressive revelation.*" This, to him, was the solution to rectify biblical immoralities. "For what is progressive is necessarily imperfect in its earlier stages, and even erring to those who come after....Scripture itself points the way to answer the moral objections to Scripture."[188] He further argued that "In the child there is an anticipation of truth; his reason is latent in the form of feeling....he is led by temporal promises, believing that it is good to be happy always....he imagines God to be like a human father only greater and more powerful....As he

grows older he mixes more with others....At length the world opens upon him;.. And as he arrives at manhood he reflects on his former years....and he now understands that all this was but a preparation for another state of being. And...looking back on the entire past, which he reads anew, perceiving "that the events of life had a purpose or result which was not seen all the time."[189] Although the Church spared no effort to condemn this line of approach, yet it became gradually popular among academic circles.[190] Since then this approach has been the dominant trend in almost all the universities of the Western world though not without resistance.

In the nineteenth century William Robertson Smith, the editor of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, advocated the principles of historical criticism of the Bible and published articles by Wellhausen there as well. He was put on trial and expelled from his chair. In the same century, John Colenso, a South African Anglican bishop, was condemned as "the wicked bishop" and his works drew three hundred responses within twenty years of time. In the twentieth century, however, the situation is quite different. Even the Catholic Church, the aged long opponent of such investigations into biblical data, have joined the majority of biblical scholarship. The Pope Pius XII with his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* in 1943 opened the door for such investigation in the Catholic circles. It has been called "a Magna Carta for biblical progress." The Pope concluded writing: "Let the interpreter then, with all care and without neglecting any light derived from recent research endeavor to determine the peculiar character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources written or oral to which he had recourse and the forms of expression he employed."[191] Since then the approach has been adopted universally in most academic institutions.

This approach, as we have seen, presupposes that in all books of the Bible there is only one meaning that matters and that is the meaning intended by the original human author. One needs to explore to the best of his ability the original historical and cultural setting of the individual author of each book or passage and look into his thought world to discern what it was that he believed and wanted to say.[192] Theologians like Kahler, Schlatter, v. Oettingen, Ritschl, Harnack, Bultmann, Joseph Stevens Buckminister, Moses Stuart, Andrews Norton, Morton Smith are just a few examples to be mentioned in this connection.[193]

Conclusion:

As we have seen, the Hebrew Bible is comprised of different books, approaches, trends, styles, focuses and directions. More importantly, it does not easily yield to a systematic theological treatment specifically *vis-a-vis* anthropomorphism and transcendence. Its original text is non-existent. In addition to that, in case of the Old Testament one is lost in the ocean of allegorical interpretations, occult and mystical meanings ascribed to its text by countless followers, specially the Christians, over centuries. What is one to accept of them and what to reject? What is the criterion to be used to prove the authenticity or invalidity of any given meaning or interpretation? The Jewish interpretations are not accepted by the Christians and vice versa. The Catholic interpretations are different from the Protestants and a very wide diversity of interpretations exist within Protestantism itself. The diversity of the interpretations about the same text is fascinating. In this process of interpretation and allegorization, the text, the assumed original revelation, seems to be completely wrapped, fully covered and often suffers violence and

injustice. The text does not seem to provide meanings by itself, but is provided with meanings by the interpreters. Instead of being the authority by itself, the Bible seems to render to the authority and mercy of interpreters. History is a witness how strange and often absurd garbs had been placed on the text of the Bible. Due to diversity of the interpreters and their backgrounds, meanings of and understanding about the biblical texts have alarmingly diversified. This diversity and lack of unity necessitates return to the text of the Bible itself.

To avoid the above-sketched intricacies and confusions I propose, for the purpose of this treatise, to treat the Bible as the Word of God and authoritative. The claims about the Bible's divine origin and inspiration should be tantamount to the claims about its full authority, a view held for centuries by the majority of its followers. The Bible should be the primary source used to study the beliefs of its followers and to compare such beliefs with other faith traditions. Moreover, I suggest that the revelation or the Word of God, if it is so, in itself should be quite competent to convey its message and spirit without any need for external human help. God, the author and source of that Word, is the Wise, the Knowledge, and the Power. He has all the means and powers to communicate His message in clear, intelligible, and logical terms to the recipients of His revelation. I believe He does not need from the finite beings of very limited knowledge, wisdom, and resources to hijack the word of God in the name of a very subjective agency i.e., the Holy Spirit. People should not be allowed to say or prove from the biblical text whatever they want to say or prove with the excuse of biblical language being metaphorical in nature. I am not casting doubts about the intention, sincerity or piety of the interpreters. What I am trying to say is simply to respect the Word of God if one believes that such is the case with the Bible. The Word of God is the text of the Scriptures and all the rest, the word of man, whatever position or status he or she may enjoy in the tradition. Let the Word of God speak for itself objectively, should be the criterion of any comparison.

The Hebrew Bible And The Transcendence Of God:

Almighty God is the hero of the Hebrew Bible. At the same time the Hebrew Bible's understanding, representation and concept of God appears to be complex and often confusing. God, in the text of the Hebrew Bible, is presented as the transcendent reality and at the same time He is often described in concrete anthropomorphic terms. These two polar tendencies or strands go side by side in the entire Hebrew Bible. Though visible efforts are made by the classical prophets to reduce the usage of anthropomorphic expressions and to lay more and more emphasis on the transcendental elements in the deity, there is hardly a page in the Old Testament where anthropomorphism or its vestiges can not be found. That is why even the Jewish biblical scholars, like S. T. Katz, feel no hesitation to admit that "Anthropomorphisms abound in the Bible."[194] P. van Imschoot, a contemporary biblical scholar observes that "There are many anthropomorphisms in all the Old Testament books. They abound in the narratives attributed to the Yahwist and in the works of most of the prophets, who have nevertheless, a very high idea of God."[195]

Considering the diversity of the biblical writer's backgrounds and confusions about the Hebrew Bible's interpretations, it is interesting to note that, as a whole, the biblical God is more transcendent than anthropomorphic and more homogeneous than contradictory or heterogeneous as compared to the deities of neighboring cultures and nations of that time. This tendency

becomes more interesting when it is looked in light of the historical fact that the Bible is not the revelation to nor the product of a single writer, but a collection of different books and volumes compiled in various places over a period of more than a millennium. There is a manifest progressive element in the theistic notions of the Hebrew Bible. Various kinds of concepts can be located in regard to the deity in various parts of the Old Testament. Animism, polytheism, henotheism, monolatry, national monotheism and universal and ethical monotheism, all these 'isms' are reported to have been practiced by Israelites during various stages and periods of their early history and overlooked in most cases if not sanctioned by the biblical writers. That is why it has been observed that "one could not speak of Old Testament theology (in the singular), for the Old Testament exhibits not one theology but many."[196] Perhaps this is one of the leading factors that "In recent discussion of the beginnings of Israel's religion no subject has received more attention than belief in God."[197]

The Unity Of God:

The unity of God or monotheism "is the belief in one unique god to the exclusion of any other divinity. Its absolute and exclusive character distinguishes it [monotheism] from monolatry which is the belief of a group of men in god, recognized as the only legitimate god of the group, but who concede the existence of other divinities adored by other peoples."[198] The Hebrew Bible in its present set up contains many passages that can be interpreted as explicitly or tacitly advocating unity of God. The first verse of the Bible declares that only One God and no one else created the universe. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen.1:1) Commenting on the first chapter of the Bible, P. van Imshcoot observes: "According to the first chapters of Genesis the one God manifested Himself from the beginning of mankind. The first account (1:1-2:4) describes the creation of the world and of man as the work of God (Elohim) who created heaven and earth and all that is in it in six days by His all-powerful word, and rested on the seventh day, thereby instituting the Sabbath. For the author of this account Elohim is evidently the one God on whom the whole universe depends....In this account Yahweh appears, in spite of anthropomorphisms, as the creator and absolute master of man's life and destiny and is obviously represented as the only God."[199] The Hebrews, from the very beginning, took the existence of God for granted as observes A. B. Davidson, "One such point of difference is this, that it never occurred to any prophet or writer of the Old Testament to prove the existence of God. To do so might well have seemed an absurdity. For all the Old Testament prophets and writers move among ideas that presuppose God's existence."[200] S. Schechter observes that the Hebrew Bible "presumes such a belief in every one to whom those laws are dictated..."[201] A contemporary Jewish scholar confirms this view: "The basic assumption that God is the source of all being is declared throughout the Bible. The very first verse of Genesis, for example, opens with a resounding affirmation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The statement is not an inquiry about the existence of God. It is a proclamation, an affirmation."[202]

Then Moses, the stalwart of the Hebrew Bible, is taught by God the Ten Commandments so that he can convey them to the Hebrews. Additionally he is required to make sure that the Israelites put them into practice. The first and the foremost Commandment is "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..." (Deut. 6:4-7) Nothing, says Abraham J. Heschel, "in Jewish

life is more hallowed than the saying of the Shema: Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." He further argues that this monotheism was "not attained by means of numerical reduction, by bringing down the multitude of deities to the smallest possible number. One means *unique*. The minimum of knowledge is the knowledge of God's uniqueness. His being unique is an aspect of His being ineffable."[203] Hermann Cohen argues that "It is God's uniqueness, rather than his oneness, that we posit as the essential content of monotheism. Oneness signifies only opposition to the plurality of gods... For in polytheism the point in question is not only the gods and their plurality but also their relation to the cosmos and its vast natural powers, in all of which a god first appeared. Therefore, if monotheism opposed polytheism, it also had to change God's relation to the universe in accordance with its new idea of God. From the point of view of the new notion of God, therefore, one cannot rest satisfied with the distinction between one God and many gods; rather, the oneness of God has also to be extended over nature, which manifests itself in many forces and phenomena... The uniqueness of God is therefore in opposition to the universe."[204] He further argues that "In the "Hear, O Israel" this uniqueness is designated by the word *Ehad*... throughout the development of religion unity was realized as uniqueness, and this significance of the unity of God as uniqueness brought about the recognition of the uniqueness of God's being, in comparison with which all other beings vanish and become nothing. Only God is being... This, to be sure, makes anthropomorphism unavoidable, and the decline of Jewish thought into myth would have been unavoidable if the *fight against anthropomorphism* had not proved from the very beginning of the oral teaching to be the very soul of Jewish religious education. It is perhaps possible to say that this fight already played a role in the compilation of the canon of Scripture... God is not that which is, nor is he only the one, but the Unique One that is."[205]

W. G. Plaut, on the other hand, translates this verse of *Shema* as follows: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone." This translation is identical with that of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In this translation, Pluat observes that, "two affirmations are made: that the Divinity is Israel's God, and two, that it is He alone and no one else. Other translations render "The Lord our God, the Lord is One" (stressing the unity of God) or "The Lord our God is one Lord" (that is, neither divisible nor to be coupled with other deities, like Zeus with Jupiter)."[206]

In "Exodus" God is reported to have given the commandments to Moses in the following words: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Ex. 20:1-5) The jealousy of God is very often mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of people who are round about you; (For the Lord thy God is a Jealous God among you) lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth." (Deut. 6:14-15) This theme is so pervasive in the entire Hebrew Bible (Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15, Ex. 20:4-5; Jos. 24:19 etc.) that Imschoot argues that "jealousy is a trait completely characteristic of Yahweh, since in the Old Testament it most frequently expresses the exclusive character of the God of Israel." [207]

The Midrash translates the first part of this commandment as follows: "You shall have none of those (whom others call) gods before Me."[208] Plaut observes, that "The prohibition of the sculptured images for purpose of adoration stresses the incorporeality of God. "You saw no shape when the Lord your God spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire", Deuteronomy 5:15 reminds the people. The worship of images is proscribed in the most urgent and vivid terms: nothing, but absolutely nothing, is permitted that might lead to idolatry....This meant, however, that, in ages when the arts served primarily the goals of religion, sculpture and painting found no fertile soil amongst the Jewish people. Instead, Judaism directed its creative powers towards the inner life, the vision of souls rather than the eye, the invisible rather than the visible, the intangible rather than the sensual."[209] In view of the great significance of this commandment, Ibn Ezra, the great Jewish mediaeval scholar, used to say that this commandment must not be transgressed even in one's thought.

Contrary to the above mentioned explanations, some modern scholars do not see in the First Commandment the above mentioned affirmation of God's unity, uniqueness and transcendence. They, following methods of biblical criticism, date this commandment far later than Moses' times.[210] They also argue that it may prove monolatry or mono-Yahwism rather than strict monotheism. Robin Lane Fox, for instance, argues that "Before we find early monotheism in the first commandment, we have to date it (it might be as late as the seventh or sixth century) and also be sure that we can translate it. Its dating is extremely difficult, although Hosea might seem to presuppose it too: chapter 8 of his book appears to connect idolatry and foreign worship with a blindness to God's law (8:1, 8:12). However, this law seems to be something more general than our First Commandment, and Hosea himself does not deny that other gods exist."[211] Regarding the translation he observes: "As for the First Commandment, the translation of its Hebrew is also not certain. Perhaps originally it meant `Thou shalt have no other gods before my face' (no idols in Yahweh's temple), or `before me', in preference to me, but on any view, 'the claim for Yahweh's exclusiveness, that Yahweh alone has existence, is not contained in the First Commandment'. The text need only have been saying that Yahweh is Israel's Number One among other lesser divinities. Monotheism, the much stronger belief that only one god exists anywhere, was not revealed on Sinai's peaks." [212]

T. J. Meek argues: "There is no certainty of course that this command originated with Moses or that it was known in his day...However, the most we can claim for Moses in it is monolatry. Neither here nor anywhere else does he deny the existence of gods other than Yahweh, nor does he asserts the sole existence of Yahweh, and not having done that, he cannot be called a monotheist. Even O. E. James, who is an anthropologist as well as an Old Testament scholar, with decided leaning towards the theory of primitive monotheism, has to acknowledge that the command asserts nothing more than monolatry and not pure monotheism, and so conservative a churchman as late Bishop Gore has to concede that it neither proves nor disproves either monolatry or monotheism." Meek further argues, that "The Lutheran Church is one of our more conservative denominations and yet one of its theological professor, Harold L. Creager, writes concerning the First Commandment in its official organ, *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*: "In neither case [of two possible translations, "in addition to" and " in preference to"], of course, is any teaching here of monotheism, but only of henotheism. The possibility of worshipping other

gods, either along with Jehovah or as entirely displacing him, is directly conceived." Identical are the views of other leading conservative scholars."[213] G. Von Rad observes that "The problem of monotheism in ancient Israel is admittedly connected with the first commandment, in so far as Israel's monotheism was to some extent a realization which was not granted to her without the long discipline of the first commandment. Still, it is necessary to keep the two question as far as possible distinct, for the first commandment has initially nothing to do with monotheism: on the contrary, as the way it is formulated shows, it is only comprehensible in the light of a background which the historian of religion designates as polytheism. Even the way in which Jahweh introduces himself, "I am Jahweh, your God," presupposes a situation of polytheism. For many a generation there existed in Israel a worship of Jahweh which, from the point of view of the first commandment, must undoubtedly be taken as legitimate, though it was not monotheistic. It is therefore called henotheism or monolatry."[214] K. Armstrong writes:" When they recute the *Shema* today, Jews give it a monotheistic interpretation: Yahweh our God is One and unique. The Deuteronomist had not yet reached this perspective. "Yahweh *ehad*" did not mean God is One, but that Yahweh was the only deity whom it was permitted to worship. Other gods were still a threat: their cults were attractive and could lure Israelites from Yahweh, who was a jealous God."[215] She further observes that "The Israelites did not believe that Yahweh, the God of Sinai, was the *only* God, but promised, in their covenant, that they will ignore all other deities and worship him alone. It is very difficult to find a single monotheistic statement in the whole of the Pentateuch. Even the Ten Commandments delivered on Mount Sinai take the existence of other gods for granted: " There shall be no strange gods for you before my face."[216]

Such an interpretation of the First Commandment seems more in line with the biblical data (as we will see later in this chapter). The strong emphasis upon Yahweh's jealousy implies belief in monolatry. One cannot be jealous of people being devoted to a non-existent entity. Jealousy implies a rival for one's affections and goes well with the idea that Israel ought to be loyal to Yahweh and not to the gods of other nations.

Historically speaking, the Jews, from antiquity to the modern times, have held the First Commandment as emphasizing the unity of Yahweh. Traditional Jews had always argued that the Hebrew religion had been monotheistic from the very beginning. Such an understanding had been the theme of the entire corpus of the Rabbinic/Midrashic literature. Even ancient Jewish philosophers and historians, like Philo, Jubilees and Josephus, had maintained similar views about the ancient Hebraic religion. Almost all of them contended that Abraham believed in monotheism and following him, the patriarchs were monotheists. Though the philosophers disagreed with the rabbinical traditions in maintaining that Abraham was a convert to monotheism; nevertheless; like the Rabbinic Judaism, they saw in Abraham the origin of Hebrew monotheism. In the words of Jubilees "He was thus the first to boldly declare that, God, creator of the universe, is one, in that, if any other being contributed aught to man's welfare, each did so by His command and not in virtue of its own inherent power."[217] (Philo and Josephus held similar views). Biblical texts like Exodus 3:6, 16 and 4:5 were frequently quoted to substantiate the claim that the God of Moses was also the God of Abraham and other patriarchs. The Bible reports that God said to Moses "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." (Ex.3:6) God ordered Moses "Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of

Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt." (Ex. 3:16 see also Gn. 26:24, 28:13, 32:10, 43:23, 49:24-25)

In modern times A. Alt, while drawing attention to Palmyrene and Nabataean inscriptions, argues that three such gods who were not bound to any locality and were worshipped in patriarchal times (the God or Shield of Abraham, the Fear of Isaac (Gn. 31:42), the Mighty One of Jacob (Gn. 49:24)), were fused to make the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and identified with Yahweh.[218] Following Alt's theory Spieser, J. P. Hyatt, R. de Vaux and C. A. Simpson contend that Patriarchs (specially Abraham) were monotheists.[219] Simpson, for instance, argues that, "Momentary monotheism was a characteristic of primitive Jahvism from the first, necessary because of the very nature of the religion."[220] Roland de Vaux observes that "Genesis tells the history of the ancestors of Israel, the line of Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from whom were born the Twelve Tribes. They acknowledge the same God, who will become the God of Israel."[221] A. B. Davidson, discussing about the peculiarity of the patriarchal religion, observes that "this peculiarity, if it cannot be called Monotheism, forms at least a high vantage ground from which a march towards Monotheism may commence. And it is probable that we see in the patriarchal names just referred to, particularly in *El Shaddai*, the advance in the family of Abraham towards both the unity and the spirituality of God. He who called God *El Shaddai*, and worshipped Him as the 'Almighty,' might not have the abstract and general conception in his mind that He was the only powerful Being existing. But, at least to him He was the supreme power in heaven and in earth, and He had given him His fellowship, and was condescending to guide his life. And when one named the Being whom he served *as eternal God*, or the *living God*, though he might not have present before his mind the general conception of what we call the *spirituality* of God, yet practically the effect must have been much the same. For He who existed from eternity and had life in Himself could not be part of the material world everywhere subject to change, nor could He exist in flesh which decayed."[222] He concludes arguing that there may be a difference of emphasize "But the doctrines were the same from the beginning."[223]

Davidson seems to be speculating more than substantiating his claims from the data of the Hebrew Bible itself. The above mentioned names (like *El Shaddai)* do not prove that the patriarchs believed in monotheism or the spirituality of the Deity as Davidson contends. K. Armstrong, after a good discussion of biblical narration, argues that it is wrong to "assume that the three patriarchs of Israel- Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob- were monotheists, that they believed in only one God. This does not seem to have been the case. Indeed, it is probably more accurate to call these early Hebrews pagans who shared many of the religious beliefs of their neighbors in Canaan. They would certainly have believed in the existence of such deities as Marduk, Baal and Anat. They may not all have worshipped the same deity: It is possible that the God of Abraham, the "Fear" or "Kinsman" of Isaac and the "Mighty One" of Jacob were three separate gods. We can go further. It is highly likely that Abraham's God was El, the High God of Canaan. The deity introduces himself to Abraham as El Shaddai (El of the Mountain), which was one of El's traditional titles. Elsewhere he is called El Elyon (The Most High God) or El of Bethel." [224]

Ignatius Hunt explains that "The accounts in Gn 12-50 were written up in their final form many centuries after the events narrated had taken place. In the meantime the Hebrew religion had greatly developed, and great advances had been made, at least by those who served as Israel's

spokesmen. Many crudities, and other defects of the ancient traditions were corrected and at times omitted, recast, or transformed in keeping with a more refined outlook. This is common in religious development."[225] After posing a number of questions regarding these biblical narration, Hunt concludes, that "With the advent of archaeology and the discovery of sources of texts, the religious milieu of the patriarchs is now seen as completely polytheistic."[226] A. Lod's conclusions are very much the same. [227]

Hans Kung views patriarchal religion as henotheism. "Thus nowadays there is agreement among the critical exegetes that neither the exalted ethic of Bible nor strict monotheism will have prevailed as early as the time of patriarchs. From a historical perspective, Abraham was certainly a henotheist, someone who presupposed the existence of a number of gods but who accepted only the one God, his God, as the supreme and binding authority." [228]

In the light of the available biblical data, polytheism, or in extreme case henotheism, rather than monotheism seems to be a better alternative with regard to the patriarch's understanding of God. Biblical text portrays patriarchs as worshipping other gods besides Yahweh. "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors-Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor-lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods." (Jos. 24:3) It also says "Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Jos. 24:15-15) Moreover, we are told that God made Himself known to the patriarchs with the old name of "El Shaddi" and to Moses with the name of Yahweh. "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddy but by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them." (Ex. 6:2-3) *El Shaddi* means the God of Mountain, or The Rock, or the Mighty One etc. and has occurred in the Pentateuch several times. (Gn. 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, 43:14, 48:3). The Bible also uses different other personal names like *El-Elyon* (God most high), *El Roi* (God of vision) or *El Olam* (The Eternal God). The patriarchs are reported to be addressing God with these names and also with the word "*Elohim*", the word most often used in the Hebrew Bible to designate God (about 2,000 times)."[229] Elohim is a plural word and in many early passages is used straightforwardly in the plural sense.[230] For Example "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods (elohim)..." (Ex. 18:11, also see 12:12, 34:15, Dt. 10:17, Jgs. 9:9-13) In view of these facts, it may certainly be concluded that elohim, the plural word, was later used as if it were singular while retaining its original format. The frequent usage of these names also suggest that the original god of Israel was El as Mark S. Smith contends. This reconstruction, he argues, "may be inferred from two pieces of information. First the name of Israel is not a Yahwistic name with the divine element of Yahweh, but an El name, with the element *el*. This fact would suggest that El was the original chief god of the group named Israel. Second, Genesis 49:24-25 presents a series of El epithets separate from the mention of Yahweh in verse 18... Similarly, Deuteronomy 32:8-9 casts Yahweh in the role of one of the sons of El, here called *elyon*: " When the Most High (*elyon*) gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated humanity, he fixed the boundaries of the people according to the number of divine beings. For Yahweh's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage."[231] Further more, the variety and diversity of these names also suggest that originally there was a belief in many "Els".

Many of the personal names, observes Rowely, "which we find in Israel testify to the polytheistic background out of which they emerged. Alt has argued that each of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had their own special God. Moreover, while in the Old Testament Shaddi, El, Elyon, and Yahweh are all equated and identified, it is hardly to be denied that they were once regarded as separate deities."[233] The claims about the patriarchal monotheism therefore seem to be less of a reality than polytheism or henotheism.

Contrary to that, D. Nielsen argues that the word "*elohim*" originally is not a plural word. It is the noun `*elah*' with mimation (with the addition of an m).[234] Davidson contends that though the word is plural but "a plural of that sort called the plural of *majesty* or *eminence*, more accurately the plural of *fullness* or *greatness*. It is common in the East to use the plural to express the idea of the singular in an intensified form."[235] It, to Davidson, does not imply polytheistic tone or background. "Some have regarded the plural form *Elohim* as a remnant of polytheism. But to speak of `the gods' is not natural in a primitive age, and this can scarcely be the origin of the plural."[236] Hermann Cohen argues that "the intention of this word in the plural form could not be plurality, but, as its connection with the singular form proves, singularity."[237] Moreover, Davidson sees its origin in prehistoric animism or spiritism from where, as he contends, the ancient Israelites developed their practical monotheism. On the other hand, Davidson himself confesses that the word in itself does not imply monotheism neither do the other related names, "Such names as *El-Elyon, El-Shaddai*, do not of themselves imply Monotheism, inasmuch as one God Most High, or Almighty, might exist though there were minor gods...",[238] In light of the above mentioned passages where it has straightforwardly been used as plural (see also Deut. 10:17, Jgs. 9:9-13, 11:24, 3 Kings 11:5), and other passages where it has a weakened meaning and is used for beings though belonging to the divine sphere have lesser importance or intensity (Jb. 1:6, 2:1), its plurality rather than singularity becomes more evident. Therefore, it is more convincing to agree with R. Smend, E. Meyer, Otto Eissfeldt, W. Eichrodt, and many others that the word elohim "is a vestige of the polytheism of the ancient Hebrews: gradually they fused the many local divinities which they adored into one single god and came to use the plural as singular to designate the unique God." [239]

Monotheism also asserts that "God transcends nature, and is not identical with or part of it."[240] The transcendence of God is one of the crucial traits of monotheism. Hence Yahweh is told to be the Most High God (Gen. 14:18-20) who is "The Lord God of heaven" (Gn. 24:7) who dwells in celestial heights (Gen. 19:24; 21:17;24:7). Abraham is reported to have said to the King of Sodom "I have lift up mine hand unto the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth." (Gen. 14:22) In Genesis 14 alone, the phrase "Most High God" has been used four times. (verses 18,19, 20, 22 also see Num. 24:16; Deut. 32:8) In Psalm 7:17 it says "I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high." He is exalted in the earth "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Ps. 46:10) He is exalted because he dwells on high. (Isa. 2: 1117, 33:5) God rides in his eminence through the skies "There is none like unto the God of Jesh-u-run, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge..." (Deut. 33:26,27) From passages like these Davidson argues that to the Hebrews "God and the world were always distinct. God was not involved in the process of nature. These processes were caused by God, but were quite distinct from God." [241]

He is also "The Holy" *qados*. "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none besides thee: neither is there any rock like our God." (1 Sam. 2:2 also see 2 Sam. 7:22; Isa. 1:4; 10:17; 40:25; 30:11-12; Jos. 24:19; Hb. 3:3; Jb. 6:10) The governing principle or the motto of the so called "Holiness Code" is "You shall be holy, for the Lord your God am holy." (Lev. 19:2) Robert C. Dentan observes that "the word "holy" has become almost epitome of the whole character of the God of Israel. On the one hand, in its original metaphysical sense, it speaks of its inexpressible remoteness from everything created, his absolute otherness to everything that is, and of his ineffable power, manifest in the violent forces of nature, that summons all the nature to kneel before him in reverent awe. But, on the other hand, it speaks with equal clarity of the moral purity of his being, which excludes the ugly, the cruel, the irresponsible and the arbitrary, and makes him of "purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. 1:13). When the several "Isaiahs" who produced the Book of Isaiah speak so regularly of Yahweh as the "Holy One" (Isa. 57:15)-"the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 1:4; 41:14)...it is in both these senses, the metaphysical and the moral, that they use the term, but the major stress has come to be on the latter."[242] To Imschoot, "Holiness" of Yahweh presented by the biblical text does not lay as much stress upon the moral perfection of God as it does upon the transcendence and otherness of God. He observes: "Although the God of Israel has always been a moral God, as many old accounts and ancient theophoric names attest, the holiness which characterizes Him does not denote, in all the texts, Yahweh's moral perfection. Several-and this is largely true of the oldest ones-denote only the "numinous" aspect... The "numinous" embraces several elements: it is "the wholly other", that is to say, that which is totally different from and above all being, that which is powerful and majestic, mysterious and terrifying, but at the same time fascinating."[243] Baab also observes that the name "Holy" stresses the apartness and otherness of God.[244] Davidson believes that `holiness' of God means his otherness[245] and also implies his moral perfection. He adds a third meaning to them by arguing that "He is not regarded so much in the character of a righteous ruler as in that of a sensitive being which reacts against sin. In this view Jehovah is called holy, and atonement is removal from men of all uncleanness disturbing to Jahovah's nature."[246]

Eichrodt contends that "The consciousness of standing in the presence of the Holy One had nothing primarily to do with ethical motives; it remained a purely religious phenomenon; though by bringing man close to divine Lord it afforded an impulse to personal decision, even when God's acts of power did not allow of being understood in ethical terms."[247]After discussing Deutero-Isaiah and Hosea's usage of the term, he concludes "Nevertheless, in the end it is the incomprehensible creative power of love which marks out Yahweh as the wholly 'other'." [248]

It is evident from the above discussion that a great many Old Testament theologians interpret holiness of the Hebrew's God as His transcendence over and otherness from the world.[249] They seem to argue that a developed concept of the divine transcendence is implied in the Hebrew Bible's usage of the term "Holy" for God. Katz, for instance, argues that "the God of the Bible transcends the world of nature which is His creation. It is He who has brought the world into being, established its laws and given it its order. Likewise He has His being outside of time and space, which are also His creations. Everything which has been created must perish, but He alone who preceded the universe and brought everything also into being will remain after it has disappeared. In the world of flux he alone does not change; he is the immutable foundation of all existence."[250] Hermann Cohen argues, that "the uniqueness of God consists in *incomparability*."[251]

It may be mentioned, however, that all these intellectual and philosophical interpretations of the title "Holy" are probably reflections of interpreters' backgrounds and on key points do not find substantial support from the biblical data. Such lofty claims of God's incomparability, immutability, and otherness cannot be proved from the material attributed either to Moses or to many other biblical writers, as we will have the opportunity to see later in this chapter.

Monotheism also declares that God is different from human beings and is not comparable or similar to them.. His ways are not the ways of mortals. So the Bible says: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19) "For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him? O Lord God of hosts who is as mighty as you O Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them...The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it-you have founded them." (Ps. 89:6-11) All other gods are made of wood and stone, "the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell." (Deut. 4:28) But nobody can see Him and survive "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." (Ex. 33:20)

Most of the passages emphasizing God's incomparability are from later writings. The polemics against polytheism and idolatry and stress on the otherness and transcendence of God increases noticeably in the latter prophets like Isaiah, Hosea, Nahum and others. "All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. To whom then you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? An Idol?- A work-man costs it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold, and casts for it silver chains...It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing." (Isa.40:17-23) " Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let them proclaim it..." (Second Isa. 44:6-7)

Here in these prophets the actual denial of other god's worship and existence is seen. Isaiah explains the absurdity of idol worship in the following strong words: "All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit; their witnesses neither see nor know. And so they will be put to shame. Who would fashion a god or cast an image that can do no good?...The ironsmith fashions it and works it over the coals, shaping it with hammer, and forging it with his strong arms; he becomes hungry and his strength fails, he drinks no water and is faint. The carpenter stretches a line, marks it out with a stylus, fashions it with planes, and marks it with a compass, he makes it in human form, with human beauty, to be set up in a shrine...Then he makes a god and worships it, makes it a carved image and bows down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire...The rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, bows down to it and worships it; he prays to it and says," Save me, for you are my god!" They do not know, nor they comprehend, for their eyes are shut, so they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand." (Second Isa.44:9-19; also see 44:6-8; 43:10-14; 45:12-13) He further ridicules the idol worshippers by saying: "To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, as though we were

alike? Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales-they hire a goldsmith, who makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries out to it , it does not answer or save anyone from trouble...for I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is no one like me..." (Second Isa. 46:5-9; also 45:21-25; 55:7-19) God is not made of any material thing but is a spirit. "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." (Isa. 31:3)

Contrary to the above discussed transcendence and otherness of God, there are many passages in the Hebrew Bible that portray God as part of this world of nature. In spite of being the "Most High", according to Exodus 15:17, he had a sanctuary on the mountain that he built by his own hands, "You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O Lord, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established." Psalm 76:1-2 specifies his dwelling place, "In Judah God is known, his name is great in Israel. His abode has been established in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion." Zion is his eternal dwelling place "Rise up, O Lord, and go to your resting place...For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: This is my resting place forever; here I will reside, for I have desired it." (Ps. 132:8-12-13) In addition to Zion, he dwells on holy mountains, on Sinai, Horeb, the heights of Seir (Jgs. 5:4). His epithet "*s'dy* or Shaddy" probably means "Mountain-dweller" as De Moor has shown.[252] Korpel has observed that "The idea of God dwelling on mountain [*hr*], or hill [*qb`h*] occurs throughout the Old Testament. In 2 Ki. 20:23, 28 it is expressly stated that YHWH is mountain god [*'ihy hrym*] and *not* a god of plains [*`mqym*]. Most theophanies also took place on a mountain."[253] God also has his abodes in ancient sanctuaries, such as Bethel (Gn. 28:16-17, 31:13), Barsabee (Gn. 21:33) and later in the temple of Jerusalem (Jer. 7:4).

Archaeological investigations have proved that in ancient Israel there were numerous sanctuaries founded for Yahweh at various sites.[254] Though Solomon is reported to have said "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you" (1 Kings, 8:27). In the same chapter it is said also: "And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever." (1 kg. 8:10-13) Before these sanctuaries were built, Yahweh lived only in a tent and a tabernacle, "I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, But I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle." (2 Sam. 7:6-7) Several verses show that Yahweh was believed to be enthroned on Cherubim (2 Sam. 6:2) and was present only at a place where his ark was located. "When the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. When the Phi-lis-tines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean? When they learned that the ark of the Lord had come to the camp, the Phi-lis-tines were afraid, for they said, "Gods have come to the camp." (1 Sam. 4:5-6) The King James version translates the last verse as "for they said, God is come into the camp."

A. Lods has summarized four stages of development regarding the idea of Yahweh's dwelling. "In the early days of the settlement, the old idea persisted that Jahweh dwelt in the *desert of the south*

(Judges v.4); but this soon disappeared, and only survived in the imaginative descriptions of the poets, by nature conservers of tradition...When the people had become firmly rooted in Palestine, a new concept grew up, namely, that Jahweh was the *God of the land of Canaan*. So close a bond was formed between Jahweh and this land that Palestine was often represented as being the only abode of Jahweh. The people who live on the frontiers of the chosen land are "nigh unto Jahweh" (Jer. xii. 14). To be banished is to be "driven out from the face of Jahweh." He cannot be worshipped in any other country: a foreign soil, belonging to other gods, permeated with their effluvia, is unclean in the eyes of the God of Israel. Hence in order to obtain the help of Jahweh in a foreign country, it is necessary either to make a vow to him, that is, to promise him a sacrifice, a vow which can only be paid on returning to Palestine, as Absolem did, or to have recourse to the more original method of Naaman, the Aramean general whom Elisha healed of his leprosy: he carried off into his own country two mules' load of earth from the land of Canaan, and set up an alter which was thus land of Jahweh (2 Kings v. 17). [255]

In the third stage, observes Lods, a distinct belief evolved that "Jahveh dwells in the *sanctuaries of the land of Canaan*. When the Israelite went on a pilgrimage to one of these holy places, he spoke, thought, felt and acted as if his God were really permanently and completely present within the limits of this one sacred enclosure...These beliefs persisted in spit of the most spiritual teaching of the great prophets, even among the prophets themselves. According to Ezekiel the destruction of the temple in 586 was only possible because Jahweh had previously abandoned his sanctuary (cc. viii.-xi). The whole priestly legislation is unintelligible unless it is recognized that the post-exilic Jews believed in a real though mysterious presence of the God of the heavens within the Holy of Holies of the second temple."[256] It was only in the fourth stage that the belief appeared that Jahweh dwells in heaven. (Ex. 24:10; Ezek.1:26; 10:1; Ps.135:7; Deut. 28:12 etc.) This thought of Yahweh as dwelling in heaven, argues Lods, "did not necessarily involve the abandonment of terrestrial limits which popular belief imposed upon him. It is possible that the God of Israel was thought of as reigning only in that part of the heavens corresponding to the land of Canaan, in "the heaven of Jacob," as poet of that period expresses it (Deut. xxxiii. 28). However, such a representation would suggest a more superhuman, less material conception of the nature of Jahweh and one which would hormonize better with the increasing recognition of the wider extent of his kingdom."[257]

Surprisingly, Davidson derives altogether different conclusions from the above quoted passages i.e. the universality of Israel's God. "We cannot say that from the time of Israel's becoming a nation any belief in a local limitation of God can be traced. The sanctuaries scattered up and down the country were hardly places where, having manifested Himself, He was held to have authorized His worship. Such facts as that men, e.g. Gideon, Saul, etc. reared an alter anywhere, and that Absalom who in exile in Geshur outside of Palestine made a vow to Jehovah, show that they conceive of Jehovah as without local limitations."[258]

Davidson, after this fascinating interpretation, cannot deny the fact that Yahweh, according to these passages, seems closely bound to the soil itself. Such a bondage is not universality but a definite limitation. In light of the passages like Judg. 11:23 where Jephthah fights Moabites to contain them to the territory given to them by their God saying "Should you not possess what your god Chemosh gives you to possess?" and 1 Sam. 26:19, all claims of Yahweh's universality

until the time of later prophets, i.e., in or after the eighth century B.C., lose ground from beneath it. They clearly connect Yahweh's divinity to the land of Palestine.

Moreover, the term `holy' does imply transcendence of God,[259] but its usage by ancient Hebrews may not be imbedded with our understanding of the term i.e. full fledge concept of transcendence of God. The popular belief with regard to the existence and power of other deities over other nations is extremely detrimental to the transcendence of God. In addition to that, manifestations of God in nature (theophanies) and in human form also indicate that the ancient Hebrew's concept of God was rather primitive. That God can "give visible evidence of his presence on earth is a conviction taken as much for granted by Israel as by other nations. Their sharing the common view on this point is shown by the fact that they regard it as perfectly possible for the deity to manifest himself both in the forces of Nature and in human form."[260] From the earliest to the latest of the Old Testament writings, God is depicted to have appeared in natural phenomena like thunderstorm (Ex. 19:9ff; 20:18ff; Deut. 5:21;33:2; Judg. 5:4ff; Ps. 18:8ff; 68:8ff; 77:17ff; 97:2ff), riding upon the storm-clouds (Ps. 18:1; Isa. 19:1; 66:15; Hab. 3:8), causing his voice to resound in the thunder (Ex. 19:19; 20:18; 1 Sam. 7:10; Amos 1:2; Isa. 30:27; Job. 37:5), shooting fire from heavens as his burning breath or toung or flame (Ps. 18:9; Isa. 30:27). The vivid description of Sinai theophany is a concrete example of such an attitude. "On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up." (Ex.19:16-21) Also "When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at distance, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." (Ex. 20: 18-20) Exodus 24:9 narrates that Moses and seventy of the elders of Israel "went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone..."

Eichrodt observes that "It can, however, hardly be disputed that the original narrative is concerned with an actual vision of God."[261] He also warns against a common tendency of coloring the old traditions with higher concepts presented by the later narration. "It is not permissible to evade the force of such passages by playing off against them others according to which Israel indeed heard the voice of God at Horeb, but did not see any form. Such a procedure would be valid only on the historically untenable assumption that the total of statements in the Old Testament must provide a unified `corpus of doctrine'. On the contrary one thing of which we can be sure is that at different periods Israel produced differing statements about the nature of God's relationship with the world, and that there was therefore unquestionably an advance to a deeper knowledge of God."[262] The same warning should be repeated *vis a vis* anthropomorphic passages in the Hebrew Bible.

In monotheism, God is not subject to the variations and limitations of material and mortal life. Many verses of the Hebrew Bible describe Yahweh as "the living God, and an everlasting king. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation." (Jer.10:10) Joshua said to the Israelites: "By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Can`anites...the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan." (Jos.3:10-11) The writer of Psalms (42:2) finds consolation in the fact that God is living, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." "My heart and my flesh give a shout of joy for the living God." (Ps.84:2) David is confident to face Goliath because his God is the living God. (1 Sam. 17:26, 36) In view of passages like these Baab observes that "Perhaps the most typical word for identifying the God of the Old Testament is the word "living." The living God is the peculiar God of these writings. This signifies the God who acts in the history, who performs mighty deeds of deliverance, and who manifests his power among men."[263] He further observes that "The living God is, of course, a creating and a creative God....Holiness in association with personal and spiritual traits denotes the transcendent power which enables God to act as God, and not as man, in creating both the world and human beings."[264] Psalm 93 is full of praises of God's majesty: "The Lord is King, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed, he is grided with strength. He has established the world; it shall never be moved; your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting...More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord. Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore." (Ps. 93:1-5) Unlike the mortals He neither slumbers nor sleeps. (Ps. 121:4) He does not grow weary: "The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable." (Isa. 40:28) He does not repent as Mortals do. (1 Sam. 15:29, Nm. 23:19) He is Omnipotent so much so that His words are realities: "so shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isa.55:11) "I am God...there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it? (Isa. 43:13) He is the Most High, (Gen. 14:18-20-22) the omnipresent "The whole earth is full of His glory", the omniscient (Jer. 11:20 "O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart..."),[265] the eternal, "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god." (Isa.44:6 also 41:4), the immortal, the immutable "For I the Lord do not change." (Malachi, 3:6), the sublime, the spirit, the all forgiving (Isa. 55:7).

All the above sketched attributes and qualities are often related to Yahweh. They express the fact that he is not subject to the limitations of mortals. It is worthy to note here that not all the time are these attributes used in an absolute sense or terms. There are times when these terms, attributes, and notions about His absolute qualities are marked with explicit reservations or qualifications, as we shall see later in the chapter. It would suffice to mention here that the usage of these terms in their absolute terms most often occurs in the later prophets like Isaiah as we have already seen. In the early writings, reports about God's repentance (Ex. 32:10-14) and His wrestling with Jacob (Gn. 32:24-30) pose serious threats to His Omnipotence. His advise that "The blood shall be sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." (Ex. 12:13), puts his omniscience in jeopardy (also Gen. 18:21). His rest on the seventh day after work of creation (Ex. 20:11)[266] and passages like Ps. 35:23 and 44:24 go against claims of Deutro-Isaiah that God does

not weary. Such a claim is totally nullified in light of the creation passage where the word "*nwh* meaning rest" is specifically used for God. Korpel has observed that "It is noteworthy that the first verb is a general term which occurs frequently with human beings as the subject, but also with insects."[267] (see Ex. 23:14; Deut. 15:14 'man'; Ex. 10:14 'locusts'). Moreover, in view of the passages where God is reported to have ordered destruction of everything (1 Sam. 15:3; 2 Sam. 7:6), his mercy and righteousness is restricted. Even the traditional Jews understand and recognize the difficulties caused by the presence in the Hebrew Bible of such daring passages. S. T. Katz, for instance, while discussing God's omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence, observes, "Another fundamental question about the biblical view of God is whether the Godhead is subject to restriction. Biblical teaching seems to imply that such a limitation exists..."[268]

In light of the above discussion, it becomes evident that their are different strands of narration regarding the Deity that go side by side in the Hebrew Bible. The existence of such polar strands have left biblical scholarship divided and confused. They have drawn most various and contradictory conclusions *vis-a-vis* the original Hebrew concept of God. Some biblical scholars, in view of many passages that delineate Yahweh God in relatively transcendental terms and categories, argue that the Israelites were originally a monotheistic nation and their monotheism was authentic and original. It was not some thing secondary but the fundamental expression of the Hebrew culture. Israelite religion, argues Y. Kaufmann, "was an original creation of the people of Israel. It was absolutely different from anything the pagan world ever knew; its monotheistic world view had no antecedents in paganism. Nor was it a theological doctrine conceived and nurtured in limited circles or schools: nor a concept that finds occasional expression in this or that passage or stratum of the Bible. It was the fundamental idea of a national culture, and informed every aspect of the culture from its very beginning."[269] H. Cohen argues "Monotheism is not the thought of one man, but the whole Jewish national spirit..."[270] Leo Baeck argues that "Only in Israel did an ethical monotheism exist, and wherever else it is found later, it has been derived directly or indirectly from Israel. The nature of this religion was conditioned by the existence of the people of Israel, and so it became one of the nations that have a mission to fulfill."[271]

Hans Kung, on the other hand, rightly observes that "Yehezkel Kaufmann, who ignores the results of historical-critical research, does not answer one question. Was it like this from the beginning?"[272] We already had the opportunity to discuss at length the views regarding the patriarchal understanding of God. Therefore, we see W. F. Albright also disagreeing with Kaufmann and other Jewish thinkers in that the Hebrew monotheism was a fundamental idea of the Israelite's national culture. Albright, showing a great many borrowings and adaptations on the part of Israelites from the neighboring Canaanite culture,[273] argues that though the picture of Hebrew religion is not simple, but "we can state definitely that it does not support the extreme position of late Yehezkel Kaufmann, who maintained in his great "History of the Faith of Israel" that Mosaic monotheism was a phenomenon entirely peculiar to Israel."[274] But he agrees with Kaufmann in suggesting the Mosaic origin and age of monotheism. Kaufmann, for example, strongly advocates that "With Moses the sin of idolatry particularly as a national sin - comes into existence. Before, idolatry was nowhere interdicted and punished. The stories depicting idolatry as a national sin presuppose the existence of a monotheistic people. Since such stories begin only with Moses, we infer that it was in his time that the great transformation took place. By making

Israel enter a covenant with one God, he made it a monotheistic people that alone among men was punishable for the sin of idolatry."[275]

Similarly, Albright argues that "The only time in the history of ancient Near East when we find monotheism in the leading cultural centers, Egypt and Babylonia, is about the fourteenth century B.C.; it is also then that we find the closest approach to monotheism in Syria and Asia Minor. Since it is now an historical commonplace that we find similar ideas emerging simultaneously in different parts of a given cultural continuum, we should expect to find Israelite monotheism somehow emerging at the same time."[276] He further argues that the God of Moses was a creator God unrelated to any deity, unbound to any geographical area or setting or any natural phenomenon. Though conceived anthropomorphically as "Fundamental to early Israelite religion and profoundly rooted in Mosaic tradition is the anthropomorphic conception of Yahweh", but nevertheless he was never represented in material or un-exalted forms "but there was in Him none of the human frailties that make the Olympian deities of Greece such charming poetic figures and such undefying examples. All the human characteristics of Israel's deity were exalted; they were projected against a cosmic screen and they served to interpret the cosmic process as the expression of God's creative word and eternally active will."[277] He concludes observing that "It was indeed Moses who was the principal architect of Israelite monotheism."[278] In "*Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*", emphasizing the historicity of Mosaic traditions, Albright observes: "The Mosaic tradition is so consistent, so well attested by different pentateuchal documents, and so congruent with our independent knowledge of the religious development of the Near East in the late second millennium B. C., that only hypercritical pseudo-rationalism can reject its essential historicity." He further observes: "We shall, accordingly, presuppose the historicity of Moses and of his role as founder of Yahwism."[279]

Albright has used the term "monotheism" in its very broad sense and not in its refined, modern and philosophically developed sense. He himself observed: "Was Moses a true monotheist? If by "monotheist" is meant a thinker with views specifically like those of Philo Judaeus or Rabbi Aqiba, of St. Paul...of Mordecai Kaplan or H. N. Wieman, Moses was not one. If, on the other hand, the term "monotheist" means one who teaches the existence of only one God, the creator of everything, the source of justice, who is equally powerful in Egypt, in the desert, and in Palestine, who has no sexuality and no mythology, who is human in form but cannot be seen by human eye and cannot be represented in any form-then the founder of Yahwism was certainly a monotheist."[280]

Meek criticizes such a usage of the term "monotheist". He observes that "Albright protests against giving a Unitarian definition to the word "monotheism," but the only acceptable use of the word is in its dictionary sense, and it is Albright and his kind, rather his opponents, as he affirms, who are "highly misleading" when they read into a word a meaning it cannot and should not bear."[281] H. W. Robinson also warns against such a broad usage of the term. "Yet the very term `monotheism,' together with all other metaphysical attributes, such as omnipotence, omnipresence, immanence, and eternity, can be misleading. Such terms suggest modern and intellectualistic categories. They conceal the gradual development of an intuition, and substitute for it a process of ratiocination never found in the Old Testament." [282]

Meek further rejects Albright's arguments observing: "There was no great, onrushing movement toward monotheism in the Near East in the fourteenth century, such as Albright affirms. There is no evidence that Syria and Asia Minor were more monotheistic then than at any other period."

Many modern scholars of the Bible toe the line of Albright and maintain the Mosaic origin of Hebrew monotheism. G. E. Wright, J. Bright, I. Engnell, E. Jacob are just some examples.[284] E. Jacob, for instance, argues that "One cannot speak of evolution within the faith of Israel towards monotheism, for from the movement when Israel becomes conscious of being the people chosen by *one* God it is in practice a monotheistic people; and so one can speak with Albright, to name only one of the most recent and illustrious historians, of the monotheism of Moses, on condition that by this term there is understood a conviction of faith and not a result of reflection." [285]

The definition of Albright, on the other hand, is not acceptable to many contemporary scholars who see in it significant flaws and shortcomings. H. H. Rowley, for instance, argues that "Most of the elements of this definition are irrelevant to the question of monotheism, and of the one vital element there is no evidence. For no where in the Pentateuch is Moses credited with the formal denial that any other gods exist, such as we find in Deutero-Isaiah, save in passages such as Dt. 4:35, 39; 32:39, which quite certainly did not issue from Moses."[286] There is not any evidence that Moses worshipped many gods and was a polytheist like a number of his followers, yet according to the biblical narration, there exists no proof that he was a monotheist in the sense that he clearly denied the existence of more than one God. But there is every evidence that he worshipped only Yahweh and denied any association with him though without universalizing him. This fact has led scholars like T. J. Meek, S. R. Driver, and R. Kittle to conclude that Moses was a `henotheist'. Meek observes that "It is hard to find any evidence that Moses either believed or taught that Yahweh was the only existing God, and that He was therefore not only the God of Israel but of all men. On the other hand, it does not seem sufficient to note that at Sinai it was affirmed that Yahweh was alone the legitimate object of Israelite worship, and that there was no denial of the existence of other gods."[287] He also observes that "The new thing that came with Moses was not the worship of Yahweh to the exclusion of all other gods, but the united allegiance of a number of tribes to Yahweh as their confederacy as a whole what the tribal god was to the tribe. This is monolatry and is quite like the monolatry that we noted in Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, and elsewhere in the ancient world..."[288] S. R. Driver and Kittle conclude that Mosaic religion can be described as ethical henotheism. [289]

A. Lods holds Moses religion as monolatry,[290] "for the god whom Moses sought to win over his people was not a universal god like that of Islam: he had a proper name, Jahweh, local centers of worship, and an essential national character, he was and chose to be the God of Israel." He further argues, that "the Israelites, when they emerge into the full light of history and up to the time of the great prophets, although Jahwist, were not monotheists. They only worshipped one national god, Jahweh; but they believed in the existence and power of other gods: they were monolaters. But monolatry is a form of polytheism."[291]

The charge of polytheism, henotheism and monolatry is too much for scholars like Rowley, Baab, Bright, F. James, Th. C. Vriezen and a good number of other contemporary scholars to accept *viz-a-viz* Moses. Baab argues: "We must reject the easy evolutionism which sorts out the records,

arranges them in neat piles on the basis of decisions as to dates, and finds a convincing illustration of development from animism to absolute monotheism, with all the stages from polydaemonism to henotheism in between."[292] He further argues that "The concept of the oneness of God was not reached primarily through logical analysis by Hebrew thinkers; their approach was pragmatically religious and experience centered. The life and *social experience* of the community, with its inner tensions and its relations to other groups, made up the historical ground for the achievement of monotheism. The great doctrine of modern Judaism as of biblical Judaism, drawn from Deuteronomy-"Listen, O Israel; the Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (6:4)-was not formulated except as the result of prolonged and decisive acquaintance with this particular Deity. Undoubtedly the leadership of Moses, the work of the great prophets, and the faith of the many anonymous believers in ancient Israel helped to shape this doctrine."[293] Bright strongly rejects the progressive theory too, "Certainly Israel's faith was no polytheism. Nor will henotheism or monolatry do, for though the existence of other gods was not expressly denied, neither was their status as gods tolerantly granted."[294] F. James concludes that "The actual evidence regarding him (i.e. Moses) points more towards his having been a monotheists than a henotheist."[295] G. Fohrer expresses the concept more carefully when he states that "Mosaic Yahwism therefore knew nothing of a theoretical monotheism that denies the existence of other gods. Neither is the oft-used term "henotheism" appropriate, since it refers to belief in several individual gods who alternately rank supreme. It would be more correct to speak of monoyahwism or practical monotheism."[296] Th. C. Vriezen fully agrees with Fohrer in describing Mosaic religion as 'monoYahwism' rather than monolatry or henotheism.[297]

H. H. Rowley presents a relatively more elaborate and careful view about the Mosaic religion as it is portrayed in the Bible. He maintains that "if Moses was less than a monotheist he was more than a henotheist."[298] He recognizes that Yahweh shared the name with Canaanite's deity, but had a unique character of his own. "I do not take the view that the works of Moses is to be resolved into the mere mediation to Israel of the religion of kenites. The divine name Yahweh was probably taken over, and the forms of the religion; but a new spirit was given to the religion and a new level to its demands. The sense of Yahweh's election of Israel, of His deliverance, of his claims upon her obedience, were all new, and through the truly prophetic personality of Moses it was established on a higher basis than Kenite's religion had reached."[299] The gods worshipped by Israelites were identified with Yahweh and ceased to be counted against him. "This is not monotheism, and there is no reason to attribute universalism to Moses. Yet here we have surely seeds of both."[300] Yahweh, according to Rowley, was not restricted to a single area or people. "He could be active in Egypt or in Palestine as freely as in His chosen seat. A God who could thus be active wherever He wished, and beside whom no other gods counted, was not tribal or national god, and certainly not merely one of a host of gods. His "onliness" might not be affirmed; but His uniqueness is manifest. If He is not the only God, He is certainly more than one example-even the most important example-of the categories of gods. Among all gods He alone mattered, and He could do with Israel or with any other people what He would." Rowley draws from here a conservative conclusion: "This is not monotheism, and it is unwise to exaggerate it into monotheism. Nevertheless, it was incipient monotheism and incipient universalism, so that when full monotheism was achieved in Israel it came not by natural evolution out of something fundamentally different, but by the development of its own particular character."[301] Dentan's views are very similar to that of Rowley's. He observes, "The views of scholars today very all the way

from that which regards Moses, or even Abraham, as monotheists, to another that sees monotheism as emerging only with Second Isaiah, or, in less theoretical form, with Amos. The truth is probably to be found in mediating position that sees the germ of monotheism present in early times, with the full flower coming at the end of the Old Testament period." [302]

Such an interpretation of the Hebraic monotheism is neither new nor specific to Rowley or Dentan only. It has been held by a number of scholars like E. Konig, P. Volz, A. B. Davidson, B. Bascheit, N. K. Gottwald and G. W. Anderson.[303] One has to give far-fetched interpretations and several twists to a variety of biblical passages, as cited above, to fully agree with this view about the Mosaic understanding of God. Rowley's view in substance is very close to the Albright school. He, like Albright and others, leans towards the traditional standpoint. For Albright and almost all of `right-wing' scholars, "the significance of Moses' achievement for the religion of Israel is an established fact; and many of them still view him, if not as the man who taught monotheism, at any rate as the founder of Israel's religion."[304] Even those scholars who deny monotheism to Moses recognize him as one of the leading factors towards this end. A. Lods for instance observes that "The principle laid down by Moses was that of `monolatry': in everything that concerns the nation. Yahweh is the only Elohim to whom Israel has the right to appeal. Yahweh is a jealous God. This rigorous exclusivism was, however, one of the roots of the theoretic monotheism of the Jewish period."[305]

We may not disagree with the significant role played by Moses to put the Israelites on the track of montheism, but we may disagree with labeling him as the hero of Hebraic monotheism as far the biblical data is concerned. We are not concerned here with a comparison of Mosaic concept of the deity with that of the Kanaanite's or other primitive societies of that time. We are talking about monotheism as the term itself denotes. Moses, according to available biblical data, does not seem to deny the existence of other gods. His portrayals of God are corporeal and anthropomorphic through and through. Such a representation of God and lack of stand against other gods does not go well with the transcendent God of monotheism. In addition to that context, the above discussions about the historicity and translation of the First Commandment also leave a great many issues unresolved in terms of Moses being monotheist. Therefore, in light of the biblical data, Mose's monolatry is more evident than his leaning towards monotheism in the strict sense of the term. Monolatry, on the other hand, is detrimental to the Unity, Oneness and Transcendence of God as the terms are understood today.

Anthropomorphism And The Hebrew Bible:

A great majority of biblical scholars, especially after the 19th century evolutionary approach to religion and Wellhausen's evolutionary presuppositions in the field of the history of religion, disagree with the theory of original biblical monotheism or transcendental deity. They see in the Hebrew Bible an evolution of the idea of God. They contend that the developmental process starts with animism, anthropomorphic and corporeal concepts of the Deity and gradually develops, as a result of the monarchy and finally after the exile, into a full fledge monotheism. M. Kaplan, A. Lods, I. G. Matthew, T.J.Meek, J. Barr, H.H. Rowley, W. Eichrodt, Morton Smith, and Mark S. Smith are just a few amongst those who represent this position. A. Lods, for instance, argues that "Israel only attained to monotheism in the eighth century and to a clear and

conscious monotheism only in the sixth, and that by a slow process of internal development whose stages we can trace."[306] Causse attributes the beginning of monotheism to Elijah while I. G. Matthew thinks that it was Amos who laid the foundations of ethical monotheism.[307] Pfeiffer absolutely denies any real monotheism before Deutero-Isaiah. He observes that "We can only speak of monotheism in the Old Testament before Second Isaiah by using the word in some other sense than the belief that there is only one god."[308]

M. M. Kaplan observes that "The traditional belief that the Jewish religion has remained the same since it was promulgated at Sinai is quite untenable and is being superseded by the evolutionary conception of its origin and growth. According to that conception, the complex of ideas and practices centering about the belief in God underwent gradual but thorough-going changes."[309] Following this evolutionary approach, Kaplan, a well-known modern Jewish thinker, concludes that Hebrews like other primitive people were originally polytheists worshipping multiple anthropomorphic and corporeal deities. In the second stage of the developmental process, they reached at the belief in a national God Yahweh, worthy of worship and all other acts of obedience, but still conceived in anthropomorphic terms. "They retained the survivals of animism."[310] He would "fight their battles and provide them with all they needed; and they in turn would obey his laws and be loyal to him."[311] In this stage, there did not exist any thought of denial of other gods for other nations. In the third stage, especially with the victories of David, Yahweh's oneness was achieved. "By this time the God of Israel is no longer conceived merely as a god, or as the principal god, but as God, the creator of the world and of all that it contains, the one Being who is *sui generis*, whose power is manifest both in the ordinary and in the extraordinary manifestations of nature and whose will governs the life of every created being."[312] Still, even at this later stage of the developmental process, it was not monotheism in the strict sense of the term. "The religion of canonical Prophets is not quite identical with what is commonly understood by the term "monotheism." That term usually designates the outcome of an intellectual development which could not possibly have been carried on in early Israel. God, as monotheism conceives him, is a metaphysical being whose traits and attributes have nothing in common with anything in human experience. When we say that God is all-knowing, or all-good, it is with the qualification that we are using terminology which in strictness is totally inapplicable to God. Why then do we use it? Simply because we have none better. No such sophistication could ever form part of the Prophet's Idea of the God of Israel."[313] In the final and fourth stage the real monotheism and transcendence was reached at by denying the ascription to Him of human corporeal and anthropomorphic terms and negation of those attributes and qualities which were thought as unworthy of His being. The Jewish religion passed through this stage "of its existence from about the beginning of the common era down to modern times."[314] Therefore, argues Kaplan, "To ascribe to traditional Jewish religion the urge to teach the nations the formal truth of monotheism is to convey an entirely wrong impression of what the Jews conceived to be their place in the world."[315] The concept of such a transcendent Deity was forced upon Jewish thought by the circumstances in which they found themselves. "Until Judaism was compelled to reckon with the challenge of Aristotelian philosophy, the philosophic difficulty of ascribing form to God in no way disturbed rabbinic thought. Even the question of Gods' omnipresence did not trouble them greatly. Although they assumed that God was omnipresent, they nevertheless held the idea of God as moving from place to place, and of heaven as his principal abode. Certain as it was that God was a being perceptible not merely to the mind but also to the senses, traditional Jewish

religion could, for practical purposes, afford to leave unsolved the question about the form and substance of the divine nature and its relationship to the visible world. Hence the vagueness and the contradictions which abound in the traditional conception of God with regard to his spatial relationship to the physical universe."[316] It was in the medieval Jewish theology "When the anthropomorphic conceptions of God in the Bible were found to clash with the more intellectualized conceptions of God developed in Greek philosophy, there arose the need for reinterpretation."[317] Such a development in the Jewish concept of God was a result of evolution; a product of Jewish civilization and culture; and not in any way or form a supernatural intrusion or event. Therefore "The Jewish quality of the religion of the Jews will not depend on claims to supernatural origin or claims to being more rational or more ethical than other religions. Its uniqueness will consist chiefly in the fact that it will be lived by Jews, and will be expressed by them through such cultural media as Jewish civilization will produce."[318]

To Kaplan and other modern Jewish scholars like Rabbis Solomon Goldman and Herman Lissauer, "what a person understands about God or any other reality is the result of patient, persistent searching and not a miraculous intervention from a supernatural source."[319] This group of Jewish "clerical apostles", to use B. J. Heller's term, have eliminated the traditional vital God idea from their purview and program. Such an idea of God is a part of the ancient Jewish civilization and primitive in nature. As a result this belief can be dispelled and dispensed away with in the modern times. To the above mentioned Reformists "Judaism primarily is and was a culture and a civilization. God and religion played a part in it, but were not synonymous with the whole of it. Significant as it may have been to the Jewish scheme in the past, it is not essential to it in the present."[320] They do not accept the long held doctrine that "*Israel's ideal life was Israel's Scripture*" and God; they believe Israel's ideal life was and is Israel itself. Rabbi Herman Lissauer frankly admits that: "I am not sure whether we may properly use the term God since our meaning of the term is so different from our fathers. We don't hold any belief in God as an 'externalized, individualized, personal being.' When we speak the word God, it is purely in poetical meaning, and as a symbol for the idea. I have defined God as 'the advancing totality of our highest ideals.'...We deal with man and not with God. Our great difficulty is to find in Jewish life and literature any expression of this view, and we are compelled to interpret even the 'Sh'ma Yisrael' in order to enable us to voice the one expression which every Jew uses as a watchword."[321] This account of God concept on the part of some leading modern Jewish thinkers echoes close resemblance with modern humanism and places emphasis upon man on account of God as discussed in the previous chapter. Such a phenomenon of divorcing God from His high position, traditionally apportioned to Him by the Hebrew Bible, may be connected to the diversity of ideas about God found in the Hebrew Bible and, most probably, with the bold, corporeal, and anthropomorphic depictions of Him in many of the biblical writings.

It becomes evident by now that the most repeated passages (like the First Commandment), arguments, and evidences, long quoted, to prove the original biblical monotheism and transcendence of God are not fully accepted virtually by all the biblical scholars, not even by all the Jews. I feel no hesitation to attribute the above discussed multiple theories about the God concept or monotheism in the Hebrew Bible to the biblical text itself. A thorough and systematic treatment of the biblical passages, as they are recapitulated and expressed in the Hebrew Bible in its present shape, would reveal that the idea of monotheism and God's absolute transcendence was

probably one of the most perplexing ideas the Israelites had to wrestle with throughout their ancient history. Monotheism penetrated the minds and souls of the Hebrews gradually and slowly. The five books attributed to Moses describe God in relatively transcendental and monotheistic terms, yet these same books give clear indications of the existence and presence of other gods of other nations, legitimize their worship in the lands of those nations, limit Yahweh's territory, power, and sovereignty to the land of Canaan, give detailed information about his sanctuaries and dwelling places, portray patriarchs as well as known Israelite figures as idolatrous, and depict God in naive anthropomorphic and corporeal terms.

Looking into the details of such aspects of the biblical text, a modern scholar can easily see an unusual tension existent in the biblical concept of the unity, unicity, and uniqueness of God. On the one hand, unity and uniqueness of Yahweh is emphasized and, on the other hand, according to the Bible, other gods not only exist but the God, recognizes their existence by appointing other nations to them while keeping Israel for himself. "When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he set up the divisions of mankind, He fixed the boundaries of the people according to the members of the sons of God. But Yahweh's own allotment is His people, Jacob His apportioned property." (Duet.32:9) A contemporary Jewish biblical scholar comments on this passage by observing that "Faith in YAHWEH's triumphant majesty facilitated acceptance of the principle that YAHWEH was the supreme deity, that he had appointed other gods to govern the non-Israelite peoples of the world but retained himself rulership of Israel and ultimate jurisdiction in the council of heavenly beings."[322] Yahweh, then, is not the universal God but a national God of Israel. One God among many other gods for other nations with the exception of being unique among them, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among other gods? " (Ex.15:11) Such texts, argues Marjo Christina Korpel, "prove that initially the Israelites did not deny the existence of other deities and they therefore cannot be termed pure monotheists."[323]

The belief in the existence, power, and rule of other gods is detrimental to the concept of the true unity, unicity, uniqueness, and transcendence of God; therefore, the above quoted passages and others like (I Sam. 26:19) and (Judg. 11: 23-24), that assert the existence of other gods, are in conflict with monotheistic and transcendental concept of God. Moreover the Hebrew Bible allows worship of these gods as A. Lods argues: "The worship of "strange gods," as they were called, was regarded as perfectly legitimate within the limits of their respective territories. The view which placed the true God in sharp opposition to the false gods, God over against the "non-gods", and the true religion in contrast with the worship of lies, was still unknown."[324] So the Bible portrays patriarchs as serving other gods (without denouncing them as patriarchs due to such an act of ignorance) (Jos. 24:2-14-15; Jdt,5:7-9) Aaron, who was made the spokesman of Moses to the people and whom God promised to stand with his mouth (EX.3:15), is reported to make the golden calf and allow his people to worship it. (Ex.32:22-35) King Solomon is reported to go after other gods due to the influence of his foreign wives (I Kings 11:1-16). The Israelites are often depicted as engaged in the worship of other gods like Asherah and Baal.[325] Morton Smith observes: "Solomon's worship of Yahweh was not exclusive; he built high places to Moabite, Sidonian, and Amonite gods and worshipped others, too. And there is no evidence that his subjectives were more Yahwist than the King. When the northern tribes broke away from Solomon's son, Rehoboam, about 925 B.C. and set up the separate kingdom of "Israel" in central and northern Palestine, as opposed to "judah" in the south, the first king, of Israel, Jeroboam,

showed his devotion to Yahweh by endowing the shrines of Bethel and Dan with golden images of the deity in the form of a bull calf."[326]

In view of these facts, it has already been suggested, that "Up to the eighth century, the Israelites believed firmly in the existence of many other deities beside their national God."[327] Morton Smith argues that the fundamental change in the attitude towards Yahweh's worship took place in reign of King Asa (died about 875). "Evidently, from this period on there was a newly important element in the situation: the demand that Israel worship Yahweh and Yahweh alone."[328] On the other hand, we know from the text of the Hebrew Bible that the worship of other gods was still prevalent in the Israelite as late as the time of Jeremiah in the seventh century. Jeremiah admonished his people saying: "Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they make offerings, but they will never save them in the time of their trouble. For your gods have become as many as your towns, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the alters you have set to shame, alters to make offerings to baal." (Jer.11:12-13) Smith observes that "In spite of the Yahwist revolutions of the ninth century, the cult of the various Baals continued. It was evidently popular in the eighth century, when Hosea denounced it, and still popular at the end of the seventh century, when denounced by Zephaniah and Jeremiah. The prophets, Jeremiah said, prophesied by Baal and the people swore by him. Jerusalem had as many alters to him as it had street corners-perhaps an exaggeration. Sacrifices and incense were commonly offered to him. Nor were the baals Yahweh's only competitors. Judea had as many gods as it had cities. When another Yahwist reformation was put through in the time of King Josiah (621 B.C.) the priests throughout Judea had to be stopped from burning incense on the high places, not only to Baal, but also to the sun, the moon, the planets, and all the host of heaven; around Jerusalem the high places of "the Satyres" and of the gods Ashtoreth, Kemosh, and Milkom had to be destroyed; and the temple of Yahweh itself had to be purged of the vessels of Baal, Asherah, and the host of the heaven, the chariots of the sun, and the houses of the sacred "prostitutes" where the women wove coverings for the pillar which symbolized the goddess Asherah. Josiah's reforms seem to have had little success with the masses and to have died with him in 609, for the later prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are full of denunciations of Judean worship of other gods than Yahweh. Such complaints are not to be dismissed as mere exaggeration; the evidence of archaeology supports them."[329] He further argues that only "With the appearance of the beginnings of synagogue worship-a type of worship quite different from the sacrificial cult of the temples-the Yahweh alone party became in effect a new religion, and a new kind of religion."[330]

The emergence of Israelite monotheism involved perplexing and numerous factors, elements, features, and developed over various stages. Most probably, it was the Babylonian Exile that gave an impetus to the idea of a strict, universal, and ethical monotheism. W. Eichrodt,. van Rad, D.M.G. Stalker, Fohrer, B. Lang, Halpern, Mark S. Smith are just a few of those scholars who follow this line of approach. They emphasize the crucial role played by the exile experience in determining the nature of Israelite monotheism. Texts dating to the Exile, argues M. S. Smith, "are the first to attest to unambiguous expressions of Israelite monotheism. Second Isaiah (Isa. 45:5-7) gave voice to the monotheistic ideal that Yahweh was the only deity in the cosmos. Not only are the other deities powerless; these are nonexistent."[331]

As far as the textual data is concerned, monotheism and God's transcendence were hardly features of Israel's earliest history. It emerged as a result of differentiation between Yahweh and other gods and convergence of their characteristics and attributes to the Israelite Deity. "Monotheism", argues M.S. Smith, "was hardly a feature of Israel's earliest history. By the sole token, convergence was an early development that anticipates the later emergence of monolatry and monotheism."[332] He further argues that "Three levels of development in early Israel bear on convergence. The first reflects Israel's Cananite heritage, features in this category include El, Baal, Asherah, and their imagery and titles, and the cultic practices of the Asherah, high places, and devotion to the dead. The second level involves features that Israel shared with its first millennium neighbors: the rise of the new national deity, the presence of a consort goddess, and the small number of attested deities compared with second-millennium West Semitic cultures. Third, there are characteristics specified to Israelite culture, such as the new god, Yahweh, the traditions of separate origin and southern sanctuary, the aniconic requirement, and decreased anthropomorphism. Any of the features in this third category might be invoked to help explain convergence.[333] This long process of convergence, to Smith, was an evolution and a revolution at the same time. "It was an "evolution" in two respects. Monolatry grew out of an early, limited Israelite polytheism that was not strictly discontinuous with that of its Iron Age neighbors. Furthermore, adherence to one deity was a changing reality within the periods of the judges and the monarchy in Israel. While evolutionary in character, Israelite monolatry was also "revolutionary" in a number of respects. The process of differentiation and the eventual displacement of Baal from Israel's national cult distinguished Israel's religion from the religions of its neighbors...Israelite insistence on a single deity eventually distinguished Israel from the surrounding cultures, as far as textual data indicate."[334]

In the scheme of the above mentioned biblical scholars, the monarchy played a decisive role to unite Israelite upon Yahweh's worship alone. On the other hand, scholars like Albright, G. Mendenhall, J. Bright, and others, who believe in early pure Yahwism, argue that the monarchy had negative effect upon the religion of Israel. It was during monarchy that the pollution occurred in the land by worship of Baal and other deities.[335] Mark Smith, criticizing this line of approach, argues that "The pure form of Yahwism that Mendenhall and Bright envision was perhaps an ideal achieved rarely, if ever, before the exile-if even then." He further argues that "the monarchy was not a villain of Israelite religion that Mendenhall and Bright make it out to be. Indeed, the monarchy made several religious contributions crucial to the development of monolatry. In short, Mendenhall and Bright stand much of Israel's religious development on its head."[336]

It is difficult to determine the authenticity of the narration attributed to Moses or other patriarchs, as Morton Smith and others have shown.[337] The reason is very simple and straightforward. The present Hebrew Bible had to go through lengthy process of editing, party politics, correction and transmission.[338] Therefore, it is extremely difficult to say with certainty what religious beliefs these patriarchs originally had. As far as the biblical textual data is concerned, the view emphasizing the progressive revelation seems more probable. Virtually it has become a classic as observes Hans Kung. On the bases of most recent research "present-day scholars assume that polytheism was widespread in Israel down to the Babylonian exile. In other words...it was only after long controversies that strict biblical monotheism was able to establish itself. From our present perspective we have to begin from `a chain of successive revolutions in the direction of

monotheism following relatively rapidly after one another'."[339] He summarizes this classic view by observing that the ninth century, the early monarchical period, witnessed the battle against Baal and the emphasize upon Yahweh instead of Baal. "The eighth century saw the beginning of the `Yahweh alone movement,' which was first in a minority: only this one God is to be worshipped in Israel, no matter what gods other peoples worship. ..In the seventh century this sole worship of Yahweh became established. The existence of other gods outside Israel was not still denied, but in Israel, the exclusive people of the covenant, Yahweh was to be worshipped exclusively, in exclusive worship (and not Baal or later Zeus); there was a reform program under King Josiah with a purification and centralization of the cult and the declaration that the new cultic order was the law of the state. The sixth century, finally, saw the further development of the sole worship of Yahweh to the point of strict monotheism, which now denied the existence of other gods: the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians was interpreted as punishment for going astray into polytheism, and a redaction of the old writings was undertaken in strictly monotheistic direction." [340] This manifest progressive feature of the Hebrew Bible is a proof that it is a historically conditioned account of the efforts on the part of finite human beings to understand and perceive God. These efforts seem to be as limited as the limitations of the societies they first appeared in. God, as He is portrayed by many theistic traditions in their developed form, is formless, eternal, immutable, and everlasting. He does not have to portray Himself in categories inappropriate to His Majesty just because the ancient Hebrew's understanding was primitive. He does not have to sanction the worship or existence of other gods while the reality is that these gods are non-existent. These issues cannot be resolved if we take the Hebrew Bible in its present shape as the direct revelation of or Word of God to Hebrew Prophets. On the other hand, the difficulties can be grasped and mitigated if we recognize the decisive role played by human agency in the final outcome of these writings. The second alternative will free God of a number of accusations and blames that one has to face in case of taking the present Hebrew Bible as the direct Word of God verbatim.

In addition to the above mentioned flaws in the monotheism of the Hebrew Bible, there is additional evidence in the text of the Bible indicating that the ancient biblical concept of God was primitive in nature. There are, of course, passages in the Hebrew Bible that emphasize God's transcendence, incorporeality, and otherness, as discussed above (Isia 31:3; Jb.10:4; Os.11:9; ps.121:4; Is.40:28). But the passages portraying him in anthropomorphic and corporeal terms and categories outweigh the transcendental passages so much so and are so vivid that it has been argued that "All the evidence suggests that from the outset Yahweh was conceived in human form."[341] Korpel observes that early Israelite traditions attribute "a visible human form to God."[342] The majority of the mortal, human, physical and mental categories appear to be present in Hebrew God.[343] God has a body.[344] He, in the plains of Mam-re, appears to Abraham in a "mythico-anthropomorphic form,"[345] Abraham bows down towards the ground, offers Him water, requests Him to let him wash His feet, fetches Him with a morsel of bread and God responds to Abraham's request and does eat. (Gen. 18:1-9:) There are several interpretations given to this passage to avoid presence of God with Abraham. All three of them were angels, it is argued; but the text itself refutes such interpretations. Only two of the angels, Bible tells us, went to Sodom while Abraham was still standing with God. On the basis of this set of evidence, Friedman observes that "from the text it has been argued that the third visitor is God."[346]

Moses is allowed to see the back part of God (Ex.33:23) and speak face to face to Him "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Ex.33:11) In addition to Moses, the elders of Israel also saw God "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Na-dab, and A-bi-hu, and seventy of the alders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone ..."(Ex. 24:9-10) The philosopher Saadya and others' figurative interpretations that it was some form created by God that was seen by Moses or the elders of Israel, is not what the text says. It clearly says "they saw the God of Israel". The passage also depicts God as having feet, the theme which is presented in several other biblical passages also (Nah.1:3; Hab.3:5; Zech.14:4). He has a head (Isia.59:17; Ps. 110:7), the hair of his head is like a pure wool (Dan. 7:9). His face is mentioned about 236 times,[347] most of the times allowing metaphorical meanings and some times fairly literal and anthropomorphic as we have seen in the case of Moses. He hides his face. The phrase has occurred over thirty times in the Hebrew Bible.[348] "And I shall leave them, and I shall hide my face from them... and they will say in that day, "Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have found us." (Deut. 31:17; also Deut. 32:20) Some of these passages are metaphorical in nature but a good number of them are anthropomorphic. Therefore it has been observed that "Originally, however, the Israelites did believe that God could reveal himself with a human face."[349]

About 200 times his eyes are mentioned. God has a nose (Gen. 8:21), there goes "a smoke out of his nostrils" (Ps. 18:8), he smells (Ex. 25:6; 29:18; I Sam. 2:18), he likes and is pleased with the sweet odor (Ezek. 20:41). In view of such daring passages, it has been observed that "According to the Old Testament, God also has a nose ['P]. Gen. 8:21 and comparable texts state that he can smell and likes the pleasant odor of agreeable sacrifices. Therefore his people burns incense "under his nose" according to the archaic verse Deut. 33:10. It would seem that such an expression still presupposes a fairly literal, anthropomorphic image of God."[350] This and other anthropomorphic expressions in Deuteronomy put a question mark to the theory of M. Weinfeld who held that Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic school was vigorously against conceiving God in anthropomorphic terms.[351]

God's ear is mentioned frequently (Num.11:1; IISam.22:7; Ps. 86:1). God is said to have a mouth "With him will I speak mouth to mouth even apparently "(Num.12:8), he has lips, tongue and breath "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire and his breath, as an overflowing stream" (Isia.30:27-28). He has teeth "he gnasheth upon me with his teeth" (Job. 16:9), he has back "I will shew them the back and not the face". (Jer. 18:17) God's hand is mentioned almost as frequently as his face and eyes. A good number of these expressions can be understood in allegorical and nonmythological sense.[352] But some of these passages are too anthropomorphic. They describe right and left hands to God "Thy Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand" (Ps. 110:1) "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy " (Ex.15:6), "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left "(I Kings 22:19). He has written the name of Zion on his palm "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand" (Isa. 49:16). He gives Moses, on Sinai, two tables of stone "written with the finger of God "(Ex. 31:18). God has arms (Isa. 30:30; Jer 27:5), he stretches his arm, he claps (Ezek. 21:17), Amos sees him with plumline in his hand "behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumline, with a plumline in his hand." (Am.7:7).

It becomes manifest from the above cited passages of the Hebrew Bible that the concept of God, at least as presented by different writers of the Hebrew Bible, is an anthropomorphic concept. The resemblance of God to the human body is so vivid and complete that almost all the major organs and parts of the human body are attributed to him with few exceptions like legs, buttocks, toes, sexual organs etc.[353] There are certainly some passages that can be explained away metaphorically, but in the presence of such a vivid, graphic, and detailed picturesque depiction of the deity, it is almost impossible to believe that some writers of the Hebrew Bible did not have an anthropomorphic and corporeal deity in their mind. The Israelite, observes A. Lods, "went still further in this assimilation of God to man: they ascribed to Jahweh bodily organs which in man are the seat of organs of expression of feelings or thoughts: Jahweh had eyes, ears, a mouth, nostrils, hands, a heart, bowels, his breath was long or short (quiet or disturbed). These were not metaphors."[354]

Anthropomorphic expressions are so naive some times that it do not leave any room for metaphorical interpretations and even, as observes Katz, "if one explains these terms as being nothing but picturesque expressions, intended to awaken within man a sense of the real presence of God and His works, nonetheless they remain personifications."[355] They prove that Yahweh was "conceived solely as having human form."[356]

In addition the anthropomorphic concept of God is as much abundant in the Torah, the so called five books of Moses, as they are in the latter classical prophets. Second Isaiah, the stalwart of universal monotheism, does not feel any hesitation to portray God in anthropomorphic and corporeal terms. He says, "In the year that king Uz-zi-ah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the ser-a-phims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.... Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isa.6:1-5)

Amos, the suggested originator of ethical and pure monotheism, claims to have seen the Lord standing on the wall with a plumline in his hand as we have seen earlier. (Am.7:7) It is a striking fact, observes Eichrodt, "that in prophetic visions too the human manifestation of Yahweh frequently recurs, even if, with greater reticence, it is rather suggested than described; and the same anthropomorphism persists in eschatological word pictures...It will be better to revert to an observation made earlier, namely that the immediate proximity and reality of God, which for us are all too easily obscured by spiritualizing concepts, are outstanding features of the Old Testament revelation, and compel men to clothe the divine presence in human form."[357] A. Lods observes: "Another feature of the "theology" of ancient Judaism, which has often been noted, was what is known as the "transcendence" which it attributed to God. The term cannot here be taken in its strictly philosophical sense, or it will give rise to false conclusions: the Jews of this period did not think that because God was a spirit he could have no relation to the world of matter, or that he was outside the visible universe. Ezekiel and the priestly historian tell of the appearances of God to man, and sometimes make use of distinctly anthropomorphic expressions to describe divine activity."[358] It alludes to the fact that an anthropomorphic and corporeal concept of God

was not thought to be a problem at all even by those classical prophets who roundly rejected idolatry, graven images, and material representation of God. Hence it has been suggested that "The anthropopathic and anthropomorphic conception of Jahweh was an advance on the naturalistic and theriomorphic representations: this explains why the great prophets, far from opposing this mode of conceiving of Jahweh, commonly made use of the metaphors which served to express it."[359]

Moreover, the anthropopathic descriptions of God are prevalent throughout the Hebrew Bible and substantiate the above theme of pervasive anthropomorphism. Some of these attributes and actions are inevitable for God's perception as living, personal, active, close, and loving God. Such attributes are congenial to His absolute majesty and perfection. While others are undoubtedly inappropriate to be possessed by the Most High, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and absolutely Perfect God. These qualities are too human to be ascribed to the true God, the source of all perfection. It is natural for Him to have eternal life, ceaseless mercy, unparalleled, unmatched and surpassing love, infinite knowledge, unlimited and unprecedented power, unsurpassed authority and all other attributes of goodness and perfection in absolute terms. The terms which are essential to produce the profound and appropriate response on the part of human beings. But attribution of traits like weeping, sleeping, crying, roaring, repenting, doing evils, walking etc. are too anthropomorphic and terrestrial to be believed about or ascribed to any celestial being, let alone to God. They transmogrify the majesty, awesomeness and the mystery of God and transmute the resultant response.

These anthropopathic passages, when studied in light of the above cited pictorial passages, leave little room to doubt the fact that the majority of biblical writers and narrators had an anthropomorphic concept of deity and that very often they Speak of God as of a man. The God who is told to have created man in his image seems often to be created in man's own image. Some of the characteristics and categories ascribed to him by several biblical writers are such that an honorable and dignified human being would not like them to be ascribed to him.

The following verses of the Hebrew Bible would substantiate the claim. God fears (Deu.32:27), He weeps, wails, laments, "For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation" (Jer.9:10), "Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-he-res. O vine of Sib-mah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of ja-zer." (Jer.48:31-32) He does evil. It happens not only as a reaction to the sins of man, but also as a non-causal action. Moreover, he repents his planned evil when Moses reminds him of his promises with the patriarch, "And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people...wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains...Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.... And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." (Ex.32: 11-14). Commenting on similar passages a contemporary American scholar observes that "The God of Moses was a God with hands, with feet, with the organs of speech. A God of passion, of hatred, of revenge, of affection, of repentance; a God who made mistakes:-in other words, an immense and powerful man."[360] Though it is sometimes stated that God is not a man to repent "for he is not a man, that he should repent", (I Sam. 15:29) even in the same chapter he is made to repent, "and the Lord repented

that he had made Saul king over Israel." (I Sam. 15:35) In fact throughout the Hebrew Bible God is made to repent very often, "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at heart." (Gen. 6:6; and also Am.7:6)[361] This is not a perfection. It is not appropriate for the All-Wise, All-knowing God to repent of what He plans or does because His plans are eternally based on His absolute knowledge and He has all the power in the world to execute them accordingly. Friedman rightly observes: "This is a curious way to speak about God. The concept of God regretting something is strang enough. If God is all-knowing, how could He possibly regret any past action? Did He not know when He did it what the results would be?"[362]

Not only does God repents, but he also wrestles with Jacob and Jacob prevails: "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked *him*, and said, *Tell me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peni'-el: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Gen.32:28-30) Friedman observes: "After all, it is not just a story of a man having contact with divinity. It is a story of a man having a *fight* with divinity."[363] He further argues "Adam disobeys God. Abraham questions God. Jacob fights God. Humans are confronting their creator, and they are increasing their participation in the arena of divine prerogatives."[364] In addition to this powerlessness, God walks (Gen. 3:8), sleeps (Ps. 44:23), "in Old Testament God is supposed to take his rest at certain times."[365] He awakes "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine." (Ps.78:65)[366] In short God makes man in his own image and in his likeness. (Gen.1:26) Ingersoll argues, that "No one can read the Pentateuch without coming to the conclusion that the author supposed that man was created in the physical likeness of Deity. God said "Go to, let us go down." "God smelled a sweet savor; "God repented him that he had made a man;" "and God said;" "walked;" and "talked;" and "rested." All these expressions are inconsistent with any other idea than that the person using them regarded God as having the form of man"[367]

Anthropomorphism And Rabbinic Mind:

In addition to the Written Torah, the Oral Torah or Talmud is also very important to the Jewish tradition.[368] Lawrence Shiffman observes that Talmudic "material became the new scripture of Judaism, and the authority of the Bible was now defined in terms of how it was interpreted in the rabbinic tradition. Scripture had been displaced by Talmud."[369] The rabbis, observes Friedman, with the help of this doctrine of the "Oral Torah" "placed their own traditions and rulings on a par with the Bible."[370] The scholars differ over when and how this metamorphosis[371] took place but not many of them differ about the outcome. In a classic work on the Rabbinic Judaism, Ephraim Urbach has observed that the interpretations of the Sages, their enactments and decrees became Torah beside the Written Torah. Their expositions deserved decisive authority and attained at least the same place in the scale of religious values as the Written Torah, and in truth transcended it.[372] This doctrine, observes Neusner, became "the central myth of rabbinic civilization."[373]

Some efforts have been made by several rabbis to remove or mitigate the biblical anthropomorphism from Rabbinic literature. The particles like "as it were" or "as though it were possible" were placed before anthropomorphic expressions. Many actions, appearances, and

attributes which were repugnant to the concept of a transcendent and absolute Deity were ascribed to intermediary beings and angels. In these circumstances, observes Jacob B. Agus, "their legal training came to the aid of the sages. Accustomed to weigh the full significance of each word in the Torah, they applied the same method to the Scriptural verses which imply the Lord's presence with men. The verb *shochon*, "to dwell," was thus turned into a noun, *shechinah*, "presence," implying that an emanation from the Supreme Being or a special effulgence of divine radiance was made to dwell in certain places..."[374] Such interpretations had their own peculiar difficulties and problems. The terms, observes S. Schechter, "which were accepted in order to weaken or nullify anthropomorphic expressions were afterwards hypostatised and invested with a semi-independent existence, or personified as the creatures of God. This will explain the fact that, along with the allegorizing tendency, there is also a marked tendency in the opposite direction, insisting on the literal sense of the world of the Bible, and even exaggerating the corporeal terms."[375] The Rabbinic mind had two choices i.e. personifications (hypostatization) or anthropomorphism and corporealism. They seem to have opted for the second option. As a result, the "God of rabbinic Judaism", observes R. M. Seltzer, "was as anthropomorphic as the God of the Bible, but in different ways. He studies Torah, he dresses in a prayer shawl; he prays- to himself... Qualified by "as it were," the human qualities that the rabbis identify as godly lead them to depict a fatherly deity, intimate and personal, loving without compromising his ethical rigor, a God who weeps when he must punish."[376]

A. E. Suffrin observes that "When we turn to the Rabbinic writings from about the 3rd cent. A.D. onwards, however, we meet with gross anthropomorphisms... It not only wrote human history as it ought or ought not to have happened, but explored the seven heavens and revealed the Deity."[377] Suffrin quotes several Rabbinic writings to substantiate the claims. He observes that "Putting together the passages from the Talmud and Midrashim, we find in plain prose that on the highest heaven is the throne of Glory, on the back of which is engraved the image of Jacob... Metatron is close to the deity... Behind the throne stands Sandalphon, whose height is a distance of a walk of 500 years, and who binds chaplets for the Deity...God is occupied with studying 24 books of the Bible by day, and the six *sedarim* of the Mishna by night... There are schools in heaven after the Rabbinic model, where Rabbis in their order discuss the Halakha, and God studies with them... Every day He promulgates a new Halakha... He wears phylacteries... of which Moses saw the knot... At the Exodus from Egypt every servant girl saw God bodily and could point Him out with her finger. When God descended on Sinai, He was wrapped in the Rabbinic *tallith*... He has His own synagogue. He prays to Himself that His mercy should overcome His wrath... He weeps daily over Jerusalem... The last three hours of the day He sports with Leviathan..."[378] That is perhaps the reason that Gedaliahu Stroumsa argues that the corporeal nature of the biblical expressions were widely recognized by the rabbinic thinkers and that in antiquity, God had not only "human feelings, but also a body of gigantic or cosmic dimensions."[379]

Arthur Marmorstein, on the other hand, does not consider anthropomorphism a problem at all. He argues that anthropomorphism is a higher level of religious understanding and "Paganism was far removed from anthropomorphism, it cherished the lower stage of theriomorphism... The religion of Israel was from the very beginning free from this false doctrine... Without anthropomorphism the ordinary man with his narrow vision and limited intelligence would not have been able to grasp the belief in God, in His omnipotence and eternity, His universal knowledge and

presence."[380] He further argues that "In this respect the teachers of the Haggadah stand not much below the prophets; they attain in many respects the height of the prophetic conception of God. The treatment of the anthropomorphism in the Bible had from of old been a subject of dispute between opposing schools. The history of this spiritual conflict goes back very far. If this is borne in mind the contradictions between the scholars in Haggadah become much more intelligible. One has only to think of the attitude of R. Akiba and of R. Ishmael to this problem. No harm is done to religion if one designates it as anthropomorphic. All higher religious systems are of this nature."[381]

Marmorstein attempts to solve all the problems posed by Rabbinic anthropomorphism by his hypothesis that, since ancient, times there were two schools among the Rabbis i.e. allegorists and literalists.[382] By qualifying anthropomorphisms by various qualifiers, the Rabbis, to Marmorstein, allegorized and hence overcomed anthropomorphisms.[383] On the other hand, the literalists took these anthropomorphisms literally and enlarged upon them and added to them.[384] He then explained away some of the anthropomorphic passages as a reaction and endeavors to respond to the polemics directed against Israel in the Rabbinic period.[385] Schechter argues the same.[386]

Max Kadushin strongly rejects any such hypothesis and argues that "The whole hypothesis, indeed, falls to the ground as soon as we examine its central thesis- the division into two schools. In the attempt to maintain this division, Marmorstein is forced, in a number of instances, to change around the proponents of opinion, often solely on the basis of his thesis."[387] To the biblical writers and the rabbinic thinkers anthropomorphic description of the Deity were not problems. A great majority of them did not consider it wrong to ascribe to God characteristics and qualities altogether human and corporeal. Kadushin rightly argues that "To ascribe to the Rabbis any sort of stand on anthropomorphism is to do violence, therefore, to rabbinic thought. Indeed, this entire discussion only shows that when we employ the terms of classical philosophy even in an attempt to clarify rabbinic ideas, we are no longer within the rabbinic universe of discourse."[388] He further argues that "Whatever the Rabbis do, they do not really qualify or mitigate either biblical anthropomorphisms or their own. The very problem of anthropomorphism did not exist for them."[389] This is probably the reason that most Rabbinic writings seem not to worry much about the gross anthropomorphisms.

Moreover, the problem, as we have already seen in chapter one, does not consist in minor or mild anthropomorphisms. Minor anthropomorphisms (to use the term for convenience purposes) like seeing, watching, loving etc. are essential for the communication between God and man. The difficulty comes with concrete anthropomorphisms that go beyond the purpose of modality and depict God as a humanlike figure. In the *Genesis Rabbah*, ca. 400-450, it says: " Said R. Hoshaiah, "When the Holy One, blessed be he, came to create the first man, the ministering angels mistook him [for God, since man was in God's image,] and wanted to say before him, `Holy, [holy, holy is the Lord of hosts]."[390] According to Said R. Hiyya the Elder, God had appeared to the Israelites through every manner of deed and every condition, "he appeared to them at the sea as a heroic soldier, carrying out battles in behalf of Israel... he had appeared to them at Sinai in the form of a teacher who was teaching Torah and standing in awe... he had appeared to them in the time of Daniel as an elder, teaching Torah, for it is appropriate for Torah to go forth from the mouth of sages... he had appeared to them in the time of Solomon as a youth, in accord with the

practices of that generation..."[391] J. Nuesner observes that "Both passages constitute allusions to God's corporeality and refer to God's capacity to take on human traits of mind, an soul and spirit as well as of outward form."[392] Daniel J. Silver observes that "*Midrash* necessarily emphasized the immanence, even the humanness, of God... God is not an idea, but an intimate. *Midrash* often depicts God as one of the folk. God participates in the exile, cries over Israel's anguish, bends down to hear prayer, rejoices with a bride at her wedding, puts on *tefillin* and joins in public prayer. The *Midrash* innocently and happily speaks of God as father, friend, shepherd, lover, and avenger. One episode may picture God as guardian protecting Israel, another as sage teaching Torah, still another as shepherd shielding his flock..."[393] Even the cautious Schechter who otherwise argues that "Eager, however, as the Rabbis were to establish this communication between God and the world, they were always on their guard not to permit him to be lost in the world, or to be confused with man. Hence the marked tendency, both in the Targumim and in the Agadah, to explain away or to mitigate certain expressions in the Bible, investing the deity with corporeal qualities."[394] The same Schechter observes that God of Rabbis "acts as best man at the wedding of Adam and Eve; he mourns over the world like a father over the death of his son when the sins of ten generations make its destruction by the deluge imminent; he visits Abraham on his sick-bed; he condoles with Isaac after the death of Abraham; he "himself in his glory" is occupied in doing the last honors to Moses, who would otherwise have remained unburied, as no man knew his grave; he teaches Torah to Israel, and to this very day he keeps school in heaven for those who died in their infancy... Like man he also feels, so to speak, embarrassed in the presence of the conceited and overbearing, and says, I and the proud cannot dwell in the same place. Nay, it would seem that the Rabbis felt an actual delight in heaping human qualities upon God whenever opportunity is offered by Scripture."[395] Nuesner observes that "God figures in the canon of the Judaism of the dual Torah as premise, presence, person, and, at the end, personality. God is represented not solely in abstract terms of attributes (e.g., merciful, loving) but in concrete terms of relationships with the world, humanity, and Israel. The theological discourse of the dual Torah may be classified in four parts: first comes discourse which presupposes God as premise; second is the recognition of God as a presence; third, God appears as a person; and fourth, God personally participates in the here and now of everyday discourse."[396] He concludes that "out of the material of the final stage of the canon of the Judaism of the dual Torah, we can compose something very like a gospel of God incarnate on earth."[397] This to Nuesner is "divinity in the form of humanity, however the relations between the one and the other are sorted out. And that is what, in a narrowly descriptive framework, incarnation, as a species of the genus anthropomorphism, means."[398]

On the other hand, the apologetics like Sliver, Schechter and Kaufmann try to explain away anthropomorphism and corporealism of Rabbis as efforts to maintain and stress upon the immanence of God. They contend that the problem of anthropomorphism and corporealism was foreign to indigenous Judaism.[399] They forget to consider that God's immanence does not necessarily require concrete anthropomorphisms and corporealism as we have seen. God does not have to weep or cry or to repent to emphasize His mercy and love. Immanence does not require him at all to have a fixed schedule of study, make sport, and be the "best man". Moreover, anthropomorphism and to some extent corporealism have been very much there in almost all stages of the ancient Jewish thought with a very few exceptions; therefore, it is perhaps the immanence in the strict sense of the term and not the anthropomorphism that seems to be foreign

to indigenous Judaism. Kadushin observes that "the very idea of immanence is foreign to rabbinic thought."[400] G. F. Moore argues that the Palestinian masters were innocent of an abstract, transcendent God. To him, imputation to the Rabbis of the concept of transcendence is an abuse of philosophical terminology.[401] Kadushin rightly observes that "The problem of anthropomorphism is indeed foreign to indigenous Judaism, but foreign in a far more radical manner than Kaufmann conceives it to be. Such problems are not in any sense within the rabbinic universe of discourse, not even by implication, and are not to be injected there even for the purpose of analysis."[402] Their interpretations and stories are, as argues Kadushin, "thoroughly and completely anthropomorphic, and they tell of actions done by God and emotions felt by Him in terms entirely human."[403]

The same trend continued in the later generations. Suffrin observes that "A more hideous form of anthropomorphism meets us in the period of the *Gaonim* (7th-10th cent.)... The most monstrous book of this period was the *Shi`ur Koma*, `Estimation of the Height,' of which we posses only two fragments- a greater one in the book of *Raziel*, and a lesser in the Alphabet of R. `Akiba. In it the Deity is described as a huge being in human shape and out of all proportion. The measurement of each member, such as the neck, the beard, the right and left eyes, the upper and lower lips, the ankles, etc. is given in parasangs.
Only `those parasangs are not like ours, for a heavenly parasang measures a million cubits, each cubit four spans, and each span reaches from one end of the world to the other.' `And,' says the book of *Raziel*, `blessed is he who knows these measurements, for he has a share in the world to come.'"[404]

The Karaites,[405] Gaonim Saadya[406] (889-942), Sherira (d. 1002), and Hai[407] (d. 1032) vigorously opposed such anthropomorphisms and interpreted them figuratively.[408] Most of the known Karaites and Saadya were contemporaries of al-Ash`arī, Mu`tazilites, and other well known Muslim theologians and apologetics, as will be seen in chapter 4, and most probably they were influenced by Islamic transcendental thought as many Western scholars have observed.[409] Wolfson observes, "The need of explaining scriptural anthropomorphisms became all the greater to spokesmen of Judaism under Muslim rule during that period in view of the fact that in Muslim literature Jews were represented as anthropomorphists."[410] The Karaites denied the rabbinic/Talmudic authority partly due to their anthropomorphisms. Karaites like Salmon ben Yeruhim snapped at some of the daring anthropomorphic expressions found in post-scriptural rabbinic writings to show, as Wolfson observes, "that the rabbis had an anthropomorphic conception of God. Of post-Talmudic literature he explicitly mentions the mystical works *Sefer Shem ben Noah, Otiyyot de-Rabbi Akiba*, and *Shi`ur Komah*, and quotes from other works of the same type without mentioning them by title."[411] The Karaites explained most of the biblical anthropomorphisms figuratively. God creating man in His own image (Gen. 1:26-7) was explained as "by way of conferring honor."[412] They were very much influenced by the Greek rational thought and went very close to Muslim rationalists in regards to their conception of the Deity. The Karaites, observes Jacob B. Augs, "ventured into the field of philosophical speculations, in advance of their rabbinic brethern, identifying themselves completely with the Mutazilite school of thought among the Arabs. In common with the Moslem theologians, they elaborated a rationalistic theology, which emphasized the principles of God's unity, incorporeality, man's

freedom and God's justice."[413] There was so much identification that, to I. Husik, the works of one group can be credited to the other.[414]

Saadya opposed the Karaites' rejection of rabbinic/Talmudic authority and defended traditional rabbinic thought by emphasizing figurative nature of the expressions and hence figurative interpretations. In his translation of the Scripture to the Arabic language, all anthropomorphic expressions were eliminated by figurative method. For instance referring to Moses' plea (Ex. 33) that he beheld the glory of God and God responded that he could see the back of God and not his front, Saadya explained: "I wish to say in explanation of this entire passage that the Creator possesses an effulgence which He created and showed to the prophets in order that they might be convinced that the words they hear are indeed from the Creator. When one of them sees it, he declares, "I have seen the glory of God." Some, too, speaking figuratively, say, "I saw God"... But when they perceive this light, they cannot endure contemplating it, because of its tremendous potency and splendor..."[415] To him Daniel saw not the God but the same created form which the rabbis called *Shekinah*.[416] He further argued that "If we were to speak of Him in true language, we should have to forego and reject such assertions as the following- that He hears and sees, that He loves and wills, with the result that we should be left with nothing but His existence alone..."[417] In addition to that, he, like Mu`tazilites, the Muslim Antiattributists, established the internal unity of God in the sense of His simplicity.[418] There are great many similarities and borrowings from Islamic Rationalists specially the Mu`tazilites and figurative interpretations of scriptural anthropomorphisms, as Neusner and others have observed, were mostly due to them.[419] Wolfson observes that such a "conception of internal unity or absolute simplicity was not derived by the Arabic-speaking Jews directly from Scripture, for the unity of God in Scripture meant only numerical unity. It was the Mu`tazilite stressing of internal unity or absolute simplicity that led them to interpret scriptural unity in that sense."[420] He was followed by many other rabbis like Bahya (1270-1340), Chasdai Crescas (1340-1410) and Joseph Albo (1380-1444).

It was the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Moses b. Maimonides (1135-1204), "a proud son of *aljamas* of Muslim Spain", and then a physician of Muslim governor of Egypt Ayyub, in whom the Jewish rationalism received its classic formulation. He stressed upon transcendence, incomparability and absolute otherness of God and interpreted the biblical anthropomorphisms thoroughly and figuratively.[421] In this area, argues O'Leary, Maimonides "reproduces the substance of that already associated with al-Farabi and Ibn Sina put into a Jewish form."[422] He also observes that "The teaching of Maimonides shows a somewhat modified form of the system already developed by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina adapted to Jewish beliefs."[423] Lawrence V. Berman declares Maimonides as "the Disciple of Alfārābī".[424] Berman argues that "Doubtless, there were many intellectuals who accepted the Alfarabian view and tried to understand Islam and Christianity from its perspective, but no one else in a major work attempted to apply his theory in detail to a particular religious tradition."[425]

Maimonides in his "*Guide of the Perplexed*", according to Berman, "appears as a theologian in the Alfarabian sense and here the Alfarabian point of view is clearly felt."[426] He in his *Guide* asserted in philosophical language the spirituality of God and mitigated the biblical anthropomorphisms[427] by *via negative,* by stripping God of all positive attributes.[428] He argued about complete "rejection of essential attributes in reference to God."[429] After a detailed discussion of various attributes he

concluded: "Consider all these and similar attributes, and you will find that they cannot be employed in reference to God. He is not a magnitude that any quality resulting from quantity as such could be possessed by Him; He is not affected by external influences, and therefore does not posses any quality resulting from emotion. He is not subject to physical conditions, and therefore does not posses strength or similar qualities... Hence it follows that no attribute coming under the head of quality in its widest sense, can be predicated of God... are clearly inadmissible in reference to God, for they imply composition, which... is out of question as regards the Creator...He is absolutely One."[430] To him literalism was the source of error. "The adherence to the literal sense of the text of Holy Writ is the source of all this error..."[431] He further argued that "the negative attributes of God are the true attributes: they do not include any incorrect notions or any deficiency whatever in reference to God, while positive attributes imply polytheism, and are inadequate... we cannot describe the Creator by any means except by negative attributes."[432] So God is existing but not in existence, living but not in life, knowing but not in knowledge etc. "It is known that existence is an accident appertaining to all things, and therefore an element superadded to their essence. This must evidently be the case as regards everything the existence of which is due to some cause; its existence is an element superadded to its essence. But as regards a being whose existence is not due to any cause- God alone is that being, for His existence, as we have said, is absolute- existence and essence are perfectly identical; He is not a substance to which existence is joined as an accident, as an additional element. His existence is always absolute, and has never been a new element or an accident to Him. Consequently God exists without possessing the attribute of existence. Similarly He lives, without possessing the attribute of life; knows without possessing the attribute of knowledge..."[433] He concluded observing that "every attribute predicated of God either denotes the quality of an action, or-when the attribute is intended to convey some idea of the Divine Being itself, and not of His actions- the negation of the opposite... All we understand is the fact that He exists, that He is a Being to whom none of His creatures is similar, who has nothing in common with them, who does not include plurality. .. Praised be He ! In the contemplation of His essence, our comprehension and knowledge prove insufficient... in the endeavor to extol Him in words, all our efforts in speech are mere weakness and failure!"[434]

Maimonide's transcendental Deity did not seem to be resembling the original biblical or the rabbinic Deity. It was in no way a development upon them. Its philosophical nature and foreign color was quite obvious; therefore, his Guide, observes Augs, "was severely criticized, occasionally banned, more frequently permitted only for those over thirty. It was not included in the curriculum of study in the great *yeshivoth*, but the adventurous souls who dared to think for themselves regarded the *Guide* as their Bible."[435] His Creed of the thirteen essentials of faith, observes Suffrin, "has never been favorably accepted; and, although it is printed in some prayer-books, it is never recited publicly."[436] His path, argues Guthrie, ended "in obscurity and never has been the mainstream of Jewish belief."[437] A modern Jewish thinker Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) observes, that the negative theology "dismembered and abolished the existing assertions about God's "attributes,"... This path leads from an existing Aught to Nought; at its end atheism and mysticism can shake hands. We do not take this path, but rather the opposite one from Naught to Aught. Our goal is not a negative concept, but on the contrary a highly positive one."[438] Kadushin argues that the whole "Medieval Jewish philosophy is neither a continuation of that development nor in line with it. Rabbinic thought alone has its roots firmly in the Bible, and it

alone remains united with the Bible in a living bond."[439] And the Rabbinic thought is undoubtedly anthropomorphic and in certain cases quite corporeal.

Biblical scholars and theologians, without denying the presence and crude forms of anthropomorphisms in the Bible, try to explain away some of the reasons why they feel it had to be so. The first and the most commonly cited cause is the assumption of the basic inability of the human mind to represent God as He is in Himself. The second reason is said to be the lack of philosophical spirit in the ancient people and perceiving of the Deity as living, active, personal and individual God. The third reason is said to be the practical nature of the Hebrew people, their boldness and the linguistic structure of their language.[440] Therefore some theologians like Franz Rosenzweig do not see any problem with depicting God in anthropomorphic terms. To Rosenzweig authentic revelation is the vehicle of transcendence.[441] He views human experience of God as "incommunicable, and he who speaks of it makes himself ridiculous."[442] Still he argues that "Though man is not God and recognizes his limits, he can still address God in meaningful language, with the Divinity doing the same in relation to man." In a situation like that Rosenzweig does not see "why human language to and about God, even anthropomorphic, should be considered inauthentic or impermissible, given the revelatory situation which exists between God and humankind."[443] Thus, he argues, "it is not human illusion if Scripture speaks of God's countenance and even of his separate bodily parts. There is no other way to express the Truth."[444]

It can be argued that if the Hebrew Bible is the true revelation or inspiration of God, the Word of God as is commonly held, then God the maker of human nature and revealer of His Will is quite capable of telling people in proper terms and categories what is He and how shall He be represented. He has given human beings the capacity and capability of recognizing the fundamental facts and truths and God is the Ultimate reality and the Truth as Rosenzweig himself observes: "Truth is not God. God is Truth."[445] The Bible as traditionally believed is not the human representation of what God is or what He wills. It is God's inspiration and hence a portrayal of what He is and what He wills. The very assumption of the progressive or evolutionary revelation and crude anthropomorphic expressions as resulting from man's inability to know God or represent Him in non-anthropomorphic and appropriate terms stems from another assumption that these parts of the Bible are man's words and representations and not divine revelation. Human limitations and inability to grasp the essence of God does not require and should not be an excuse to depict God in concrete human forms and shapes, the forms and qualities, which all agree, are not there in Him. It is always possible to emphasize God's love, mercy and concern without making him weep or cry. Torah's significance can be pinpointed by many ways other than making God read its 24 books throughout the day and Mishna in the night. One is at a loss to understand the relationship between God's three hours daily sport with Leviathan and the excuses of human inability to understand Him. It is perhaps the other way around. Human beings seem to be understanding and knowing too many details about Him, even His very personal schedule to the minute details. Proper communication and also the mystery of God perhaps does not need or allow that much familiarity. The transcendent God is far above such limitations.

In addition, the non-philosophical nature of a person or a nation does not require God to be represented in terms, categories, and characteristics that are altogether inappropriate and detrimental to the very definition and concept of God's transcendence and unicity. Moreover using

the same Hebrew language, individuals from the same nation and culture have perceived and represented God in transcendental, non-corporeal, non-anthropomorphic terms as we have seen above. Had anthropomorphism been intrinsic to the nature of the language, or a demand of practicality or part of the boldness of the Hebrew nation, then it would had been an inclusively universal phenomenon. But it is not. The same scholars who give these explanations to make some sense out of these primitive expressions hold that patriarchs or Moses or at least the great prophets were monotheists in the strict sense of the term. If the nature or boldness of an ancient figure like Moses or other prophets, as argued by these scholars, does not stop them from having a high concept of God, it should not be and could not be a leading factor behind crude anthropomorphisms of the Bible narration. The same can be argued about the nature of primitive societies in regards to their concept of God.

Moreover, the Bible is not, as contended, the word of the primitive Hebrew people or nation. It is argued to be the very Word of God. The remoteness of societies, the limitations of language structures and constructions, or any other factor does not and cannot force God to misrepresent the facts or conceal the truths. Therefore, the above mentioned causes may not be cited as the only reasons for biblical anthropomorphisms. Room should be left to suggest some other reasons which may explain the presence and vividness of these biblical confusions, discrepancies, and anthropomorphisms. That is the role played by human agency (the human aspect) in compilation and transmission of the Hebrew Bible as is being widely recognized in our times.

In summary, it may easily be granted that the Hebrew Bible's understanding of God and the progressive or evolutionary nature of its God-concept may have been factors attributing to modern man's reckless and heedless attitude towards the transcendent God of traditional religion. The biblical data does not seem to disprove the projection theory in categorical terms. On the other hand, in several parts of the Bible, the human element is so dominant that it seems clear that human beings are imposing their own images, qualities, and categories upon God and conceiving Him like themselves, or in the words of Robin Lane Fox, "In scripture this God is not revealing himself: human authors are creating him, as he is supposed to have created them, 'after their own image'. [446]

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[2] Ibid, 310
[3] Ibid, 310-11
[4] R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion, Holt Rinehart and Winston Inc., N.Y., 1965, 65, and also M. Eliade, The Encyclopedia of Religion, Macmillan, N.Y., 1987, Vol.2, 152, also Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible, Moody Press, Chicago, 1969,17
[5] W. Gunther Plaut, The Torah, A Modern Commentary, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, N.Y., 1981, XVIII
[6] Howard R. Greenstein, Judaism, An Eternal Covenant, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1983, 16
[7] Encyclopedia of Religion, 2, 152
[8] See details in J. K. West, Introduction to the Old Testament, The Macmillan Co., NY, 1971; and J. A. Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament, revised by E. G. Kraeling, Columbia UP, NY, 3rd ed., 1962
[9] Encyclopedia Judaica, Jerusalem, 3rd ed., 1974, 4, 821
[10] See for canonization of Tripartite Bible, Judaica 4, 821-25 and George Foot Moore, Judaism, Harvard UP, Mass., 11th ed. 1970, 1, 236-41, Geisler, Ibid, 148-161
[11] Moore, Ibid, 1, 239
[12] Ibid, 1, 239
[13] Judaica, " Torah " P: 1235, for inspiration see Geisler, Ibid, 62-73
[14] The Ency. of Jewish Religion, 387
[15] For significance of Moses see G. von Rad, Moses, Association Press, NY, 1960; M. Buber, Moses, East and West Library, Oxford, 1947; A. Neher, Moses, and the Vocation of the Jewish People, Longman, London, 1959
[16] Judaica, " Torah ", 1236, for more detailed study see Michael Fishbane, The Garments of Torah, Indiana UP, Indianapolis, 1989,
[17] Judaica, 1236
[18] Moore, Judaism, 1, 247
[19] Quoted from Arthur Hertzberg (Ed.), Judaism, G. Braziller, N.Y., 1962, 79
[20] Tractate Baba Bathra, 14 b, quoted from Harry Gersh, The Sacred Books of the Jews, Stein and Day Publishers, N.Y., 1968, 2
[21] Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, An Introduction, trans. by P.R. Ackroyd, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1965, 158
[22] See Hermann L. Starck, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, Atheneum, NY, 1980; M. Mielziner, Introduction to the Talmud, Bloch Publishing, NY, 1925
[23] Moses Maimonides, The Guide for the Perplexed, Trns. by M. Friedlander, 2nd ed. Dover Publication Inc. N.Y., 1956, XXV
[24] Isadore Twersky, A Maimonides Reader, Behrman House, N.Y., 1972, 35
[25] Ibid, 480
[26] Ibid, 420
[27] Ibid, 420-21
[28] *Isaac Ibn Kammūnah, Tanqīḥ-al-Abḥāth li al-Milal al-Thalāth* (A famous Arabic medieval treatise) Cairo, n.d., 27
[29] Isadore Twersky, Ibid, 446
[30] Ibid, 421
[31] Moore, Judaism, 1, 236
[32] Greenstein, Ibid, 18
[33] Ibid, 19
[34] See Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, Trans. by Neil Buchanan, Dover, N.Y., 1961, 3, 193
[35] See H. Gersh, The Sacred Books of the Jews, 2-4, and Richard Elliote Friedman, Who Wrote the Bible, Prentice Hall Englewoodcliffs, N.J., 1978, 18-21 and Judaica, 4, 904-905
[36] Judaica, 4, 905, see also Eissfeldt, 160; for details of Kant's philosophy see Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by N. K. Smith, 2nd ed., London, 1958; his Lectures on Philosophical Theology, trans. by Allen W. Wood and G. M. Clark, Cornell UP, London, 1978; his Religion Without the Limits of Reason Alone, Open Court, La Salle, III, 1934; C. J. Friedrick, The Philosophy of Kant, Random House, Modern Library, NY, 1949; J. N. Findly,

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38 Friedman, Ibid, 28, for a critical study of "Higher Criticism" see G. E. Wright (Ed.), The Bible and the Ancient Near East, Doubleday and Comp. Garden City, N.Y., 1961

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3

Anthropomorphism and Transcendence in The New Testament and the Christian Fathers

Christianity inherited the Hebrew Bible from the Jews. Some of the early Church Fathers, especially the Alexandrian Platonists, struggled to reconcile and interpret biblical anthropomorphism with a Platonic conception of God as a spirit and the spirit as immaterial, ideal, and absolute.[1] Many of these Fathers saw biblical anthropomorphisms incompatible with the divine majesty and mystery, and tried to eliminate them by allegorical interpretations. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, allowed neither human form nor human passions in God, the Father, and argued that biblical anthropomorphisms were metaphors adapted to the limitations of human understanding. He argued, that God "is formless and nameless, though we sometimes give Him titles, which are not to be taken in their proper sense; the One, the Good, Intelligence, or Existence, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord."[2] Bigg observes, that to Clement, God was unknowable: "We know not what He is, only what He is not. He has absolutely no predicates, no genus, no differentia, no species. He is neither unit nor number; He has neither accident not substance. Names denote either qualities or relations; God has neither... These are but honorable phrases which we may use, not because they really describe the Eternal, but that our understanding may have something to lean upon."[3] Therefore, when "the Hebrews mention hands and feet and mouth and eyes and entrance and exits and exhibitions of wrath and threatening, let no one suppose... that these terms express passions of God." Clement continued, "Reverence rather requires... an allegorical meaning... you must not entertain the notion at all of figure and motion, or standing or seating, or place, or right or left, as appertaining to the Father of the universe, although these terms are in Scripture."[4] Origen was no less emphatic on the issue. To him, "The most impious doctrines are implied by the belief that God is corporeal; and He will be thought to be divisible, material, and corruptible."[5] His God was Mind and hence incorporeal. "Being incorporeal God is independent of the laws of Space and Time, omniscient, omnipresent, unchanging, incomprehensible. His dwelling-place is the thick darkness. `How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.' He has in a sense no titles, and His fittest name is He That Is."[6] Origen was not unaware of the fact that, "even before the corporeal coming of Christ, many passages of Scripture seem to say that God is in a corporeal place..."[7] Through his allegorical interpretations he wanted to "persuade the reader in every way to hear the sacred Scripture in a more lofty and spiritual sense, when it appears to teach that God is in a place."[8] St. Augustine[9] and many others, especially the mystical theologians,[10] also insisted upon ineffability and utter transcendence of God, the Father.[11] On the other hand, this transcendental or Platonistic

model is not the peculiar concept which the popular orthodox Christianity has cherished over the centuries following Clement and Origen.[12] In 543, Origen and his views were condemned by a synod in Constantinople and the condemnation was ratified by the Fifth General Council of 553.[13]

The distinctive portion of Christianity in the present Bible is the New Testament. The distinctively Christian understanding of God is based on the claim that God is most fully revealed through what Christians claim is his self-revelation in the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "The final revelation of Christianity", observes William Blake, "is, therefore, not that Jesus is God, but that "God is Jesus."[14] I. R. Netton confirms the point by observing that, "The *traditional* Christian theological paradigm, of course, despite much debate, was that Jesus' 'self-consciousness was always consciously of Himself as God.'"[15] If the essence of Christianity is that God has revealed himself most fully in the language and reality of a human life, it inevitably follows that the Christian understanding of God is essentially and literally corporeal and anthropomorphic. To say that the historical human person, Jesus of Nazareth was simultaneously God and man, requires as its necessary condition that divinity could find self-expression and self-exposure through the "form of a man" which is what the two Greek words "morphe" and "anthropos" translate to. To show that this is really implied in the claims of historic Christianity, it is necessary for us to show two things: first, that the New Testament documents are essentially focused on the life and works of Jesus Christ as the center of the Christian religion; and second, that the historic formulations of Christian doctrine as set out by the early Christian Fathers, and recognized as normative by subsequent generations of Christians, teach a doctrine of salvation such that it is necessary that Christ be truly God and truly man and truly one. This is what we seek to show in the following pages.

The second division of the Bible, the New Testament, consists of twenty seven books and is highly valued by all divisions of Christianity-Roman, Protestant, Eastern, Orthodox. The term New Testament stands in contrast with the term Old Testament to denote the inauguration of "a new covenant that has made the first old" (Heb. 8:13) The Christians refer to the Hebrew Bible as the Old Testament because, to them, it is associated with the history of the "old covenant"', the one which Yahweh made in the past with the Israelites in the wilderness. They refer to their specific portion in the present Bible as the New Testament because, the Christians believe, they are the foundation documents of the "new covenant", the covenant inaugurated and fulfilled by the works of Jesus, the Christ.

The central pivot of all the New Testament writings is the one individual Jesus Christ. Although they contain crucial information about his life, teachings, death, and resurrection, none of the books were written by Jesus or under his supervision. Philip Scaff observes: " ...the Lord chose none of his apostles, with the single exception of Paul, from the ranks of the learned; he did not train them to literary authorship, nor gave them, throughout his earthly life, a single express command to labor in that way."[16] There is a consensus among biblical scholars regarding this issue; "whereas we possess documents originally written by Paul", observes J. Jeremias, "not a single line has come down to us from Jesus' own hand."[17] These books were the product of later generations and are commonly accepted as the earliest, classical responses to the many-faceted Christ event. R.M. Grant observes, that the New Testament "is the basic collection of the books of the Christian Church. Its contents, unlike those of the Old Testament, were produced within

the span of a single century, under the auspices of disciples of Jesus or their immediate successors. The collection is unlike the Koran in that it contains not a word written by the founder of the community, though his spoken words are recorded by evangelists and apostles and reflected in almost all the documents."[18]

The New Testament, as said, consists of twenty seven different books written by different individuals at various places, communities, and times. It has four widely known Gospels: the three Synoptic Gospels, as the term has been commonly used for Matthew, Mark, and Luke since the nineteenth century, and the fourth Gospel of John, the Acts of Apostles, fourteen Pauline Epistles (the Greater as well as Pastoral) i.e., Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews, and the seven "Catholic" (meaning "universally accepted") Epistles i.e., the letters of James, I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude and finally the book of Revelation.

The New Testament with its present shape, number, and order, was not available to the early Christians for centuries after the departure of Jesus and his disciples. The New Testament writings, observes Clarke, were "written for the special needs of particular groups of people, and the idea of combining them into one authoritative volume was late and not in the mind of the authors. Christians, therefore, and the Christian Church might conceivably have gone on indefinitely without Christian scriptures."[19] One of the leading factors may had be the existence of an already compiled Hebrew Bible. "Throughout the whole patristic age", observes Kelly, "as indeed in all subsequent Christian centuries, the Old Testament was accepted as the word of God, the unimpeachable sourcebook of saving doctrine."[20] The compilation, collection, and identification of this particular group of writings (the canonization process) as a distinct and authoritative entity resulted from a complex development within the Christian Church. It took the Church 367 years to produce a list of writings and a canon that would contain all the present day (New Testament) canonical writings. The oldest indisputable witness to the New Testament canon is Athanasius, a fourth century bishop of Alexandria.[21] He in his Easter letter of 367 wrote, "Forasmuch as some have taken in hand, to reduce into order for themselves the books termed apocryphal, and to mix them up with the divinely inspired scriptures... it seemed good to me also ... to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down and accredited as Divine."[22] The list that follows this prologue then contains the twenty seven books of our present New Testament though not in the same order.[23] These books are, according to Athanasius, "the springs of salvation, so that he that is thirsty can fill himself with the (divine) responses in them; in these alone is the good news of the teaching of the true religion proclaimed."[24]

The New Testament scholars differ widely over the process of compilation, authors, places, sources, dates, and history of the New Testament canon. The traditional or Orthodox scholars attribute almost all the New Testament writings to the disciples or the immediate apostles; therefore declaring the New Testament as an absolutely authentic and inspired work of the disciples or apostolic age, the first century A.D. For instance, R. L. Harris claims, that "It seems clear that the New Testament books arose in the latter half of the first century A.D., and almost all of them were clearly known, reverenced, canonized, and collected well before a hundred years had passed."[25] Philip Scaff is more specific regarding this issue: "Nearly all the books of the New Testament were written between the years 50 and 70, at least twenty years after the resurrection

of Christ, and the founding of the church; and the Gospel and Epistles of John still later." He concludes that, "Hence seven and twenty books by apostles and apostolic men, written under the special influence and direction of the Holy Spirit."[26]

The scholars following this line of thought argue that Jesus was the personal Word of God, the eternal *Logos*, hence the ultimate authority. He assigned this divine authority to his twelve disciples (Mt. 10:2-5) after his resurrection.(Mt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15-16) The Church was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20) whom Christ had promised to guide unto "all the truth" (John 16:13) by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The apostles, like Luke and Mark, derive their authority from their masters who for their part represent the authority of Christ. Therefore, the entire collection of the New Testament derives its authenticity and authority from the ultimate divine authority of Jesus. Harris argues, that "The Lord Jesus did not, in prophecy, give us a list of the twenty-seven New Testament books. He did, however, give us a list of the inspired authors. Upon them the Church of Christ is founded, and by them the Word was written."[27] In the words of H.T. Fowler, "Jesus strove to set religion free from the tyranny of the written law, meticulously interpreted by the scribes. He left no written word, but instead, living men whom he had inspired by his own life and word to claim direct access to God as Father and to trust in the power and guidance of the Spirit."[28] In short, argues Geisler, "God is the source of canonicity."[29]

Such a view of apostolic authority and authorship of the New Testament writings was common with the early Christian Fathers. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons,[30] in the second century (180 A.D.) wrote: "For the Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God, to whom also did the Lord declare: `He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me."[31] He further maintained, that the apostolic authority issues from the apostles endowment with the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, "For after the Lord rose from the dead, (the apostles) were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down (upon them), were filled from all (His gifts), and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of earth preaching the glad tidings."[32] As these apostles were assigned the responsibility of conveying the faith to others, they did their utmost to perform the duty wholly and properly. Thus Matthew, claims Irenaeus, "among the Hebrews in their own dialect, brought out also a writing of a Gospel while Peter and Paul in Rome were preaching and founding the Church. After their death Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also himself committed to us inscripturated the things being preached by Peter. And Luke the follower of Paul, the Gospel being preached by that one he put down in a book. Then John, the disciple of the Lord who lay upon his breast, also he gave out the Gospel while staying in Ephesus of Asia." [33]

It is evident from the above citation that Irenaeus attributes the ultimate authorship of all the four Gospels to the immediate disciples of Jesus. It has been a common practice with the early Fathers to ascribe the Marcan and Lucan Gospels to their respective masters: Peter and Paul,[34] hence insinuating Mark and Luke's first hand knowledge and their Gospels perfect accuracy. The same trend is pervasive among the present day orthodox/traditional scholars. P. Scaff writes: "The first and fourth Gospels were composed by apostles and eye-witnesses, Matthew and John; the second and third, under the influence of Peter and Paul, and their disciples Mark and Luke, so as to be

indirectly likewise of apostolic origin and canonical authority."[35] R. L. Harris makes Mark and Luke the secretaries to Peter and Paul.[36] On the other hand B. B. Warfield,[37] Charles Hodge, Geisler, and a number of other scholars argue that it was the apostolic authority or apostolic approval that was used as the criterion for canonicity. Geisler, for instance, argues, that "The term "apostolic" as used for the test of canonicity does not necessarily mean "apostolic authorship," or "that which was prepared under the direction of the apostles," unless the word "apostle" be taken in its non-technical sense, meaning someone *beyond* the twelve apostles or Paul. In this nontechnical sense, Barnabas is called an apostle (Acts 14:14; cf. v. 4), as is James (Gal. 1:19), and evidently others too. (Rom. 16:7; II Cor. 8:23, Phil. 2:25). It appears rather unnecessary to think of Mark and Luke as being secretaries of apostles, or to argue that the writer of James was an apostle, to say nothing of Jude or the writer of Hebrews. In fact, the writer of Hebrews disclaims being an apostle, saying that the message of Christ "was attested to us [readers and writers] by those [the apostles] who heard him." (Heb. 2:3)" Geisler concludes, that "it is apostolic authority, or apostolic approval, that was the primary test for canonicity, and not merely apostolic authorship."[38]

There is a different line of approach taken by Papias, a second century bishop of Hierapolis. Though not suspicious of the intention or sincerity of Mark, he does raise some questions about the direct authority and order of Marcan Gospel. He observes, that "The elder [John] used to say, Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered; though he did not [record] in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him; but subsequently, as I said [attached himself to] Peter, who used to frame his teachings to meet the [immediate] wants [of his hearers]; and not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses."[39] It is difficult to fully accommodate these traditional claims of apostolic authorship and authority for most of the New Testament books in the light of what the modern scholarship has proved. The fact of the matter is, as Westcott observes, that "The recognition of the Apostolic writings as authoritative and complete was partial and progressive."[40]

Contemporary critical scholars, following form-criticism,[41] redaction criticism,[42] literary criticism,[43] and historical approach to the New Testament, disagree with the above sketched traditional view of the authenticity and divine nature of the New Testament writings. They argue, that the New Testament books were not the works of the immediate disciples of Jesus. They were compiled long after the disciples by the authors mostly unknown to us. Hans Conzelmann argues that, "the circumstances of composition (author, time, place, occasion, and any of the more specific circumstances) are not known for any of the New Testament writings other than Paul's letters."[44] These scholars further argue, that Jesus never asked his disciples to put any thing in writing. After his resurrection the disciples were busy preaching the end of the world and arrival of the Kingdom of God, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk. 1:15); therefore, the disciples were least interested in writing the words of Jesus. The first Christians, observes R. L. Fox, "were people of faith, not textual fundamentalists: to hear Peter or Paul was to hear a man with a conviction, not a Bible, and a new message which old texts were quoted to back up. We can take this message back to within four years of Jesus' death through the personal testimony of Paul: he 'received,' he tells the Christians in Corinth, that 'Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scripture, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scripture,' and he then appeared to Peter and then to others in a sequence

which does not match the stories of the appearances in our Gospels.."[45] In the words of J. D. Crossan, "Jesus left behind him thinkers not memorizers, disciples not reciters, people not parrots."[46] The disciples also waited the second coming, the '*Parousia*' of the risen Lord and expected his return at any moment. D. Nineham observes: "Since the early Christians thus believed themselves to be living in a comparatively short interim period before the end of the world, their energies were naturally concentrated on practical tasks, on bringing others to a realization of the situation and on the attempt to maintain and deepen their own relationship with the exalted Lord so that when he came to establish his kingdom finally, they would be worthy to be members of it. Consequently, they will have had little leisure, even had they had aptitude, for antiquarian research into Christ's earthly life; nor would they have thought it worth while, seeing that they do not look forward to any posterity who might be expected to profit from the result of it."[47] Moreover, the belief that the eschatological and prophetic Spirit of God was operative among them, led the first Christians to focus more on oral transmission and preaching rather than writing the message. Even Paul who actually wrote the letters did so because he could not personally reach those places (see 1 Thes. 2:17, 3:10 or 1 Cor. 4:14-21). Otherwise, he appears to have valued spoken words and personal presence over the written word.

Consequently, the word or the tradition was orally transmitted until the second generation when the enthusiasm about Jesus' second coming cooled with the passage of time. When his delay caused a number of problems, the books began to be written. F.R. Crownfield observes, that even when they were compiled, "it was not with any thought that they would eventually become a part of Scripture, in supplement to the ancient Scriptures which Christians now call the Old Testament."[48] J. Jeremias observes, that "It was more than thirty years after his death before anyone began to write down what he [Jesus] said in an ordered sequence, and by that time his sayings had long been translated into Greek. It was inevitable that during this long period of oral transmission alterations took place in the tradition..." Jeremias continues, that "A second development makes it even more urgent for us to discover how reliably the message of Jesus has been handed down: not only have we to reckon with the fact that sayings of Jesus were altered in the period before they were written down, but in addition we have to consider the possibility that new sayings came into being. The seven letters of Christ to the seven churches in Asia Minor (Rev. 2-3) and other sayings of the exalted Lord handed down in the first person (e.g. Rev. 1.17-20; 16.15; 22.12ff.) allow the conclusion that early Christian prophets addressed congregations in words of encouragement, admonition, censure and promise, using the name of Christ in the first person. Prophetic sayings of this kind found their way into the tradition about Jesus and became fused with the words that he had spoken during his lifetime. The discourses of Jesus in the Gospel of John provide an example of this development; to a considerable degree they are homilies on sayings of Jesus composed in the first person."[49] In Hans Kung's opinion "the *Gospels emerged* in a process of about fifty to sixty years... The disciples at first passed on orally what he had said and done. At the same time, like any narrator, they themselves changed the emphasis, selected, clarified, interpreted, extended, in each case in the light of their own personal inclination and the needs of their hearers. There may have been from the beginning a straightforward narrative of the work, teaching and fate of Jesus. The evangelists- certainly not all directly disciples of Jesus, but witnesses of the original apostolic tradition- collected everything very much later: the stories and sayings of Jesus orally transmitted and now partly fixed in writing, not as they might have been kept in civic archives of Jerusalem or Galilee, but as were used in the

religious life of the early Christians, in sermons, catechetics and worship." Kung further observes, "All these texts emerged out of particular "living situation" *(Sitz im Leben)* they already had behind them a history which had helped to shape them, had already been passed on as the message of Jesus. The evangelists- undoubtedly not merely collectors and transmitters, as people once thought, but absolutely original theologians with their own conception of the message- arranged the Jesus narratives and Jesus sayings according to their own plan and at their own discretion... The evangelists-themselves certainly active engaged in missionary work and in catechizing-arranged the traditional texts to suit the needs of their communities. They interpreted them in the light of the Easter events, expanded them and adapted them where they thought it necessary. Hence, despite all their common features, the different Gospels each acquired a different profile of the one Jesus."[50]

John Hick puts the point in a nutshell: "None of the writers was an eye-witness of the life that they depict. The Gospels are secondary and tertiary portraits dependent on oral and written traditions which had developed over a number of decades, the original first-hand memories of Jesus being variously preserved, winnowed, developed, distorted, magnified and overlaid through the interplay of many factors including the universal tendency increasingly to exalt one's leader-figure, the delight of the ancient world in the marvelous, opposition to the mainstream of Judaism from which the church had now been separated, an intensification of faith under persecution, factional polemics within different streams of the Christian community itself, and a policy of presenting events in Jesus' life as fulfillments of ancient prophecy or as exemplifying accepted religious themes."[51] Clearly, argues Hick, "the attempt to form a picture of the life that lay forty to sixty or seventy years behind the written Gospels cannot yield a great deal in the way of fully assured results."[52] Howard Kee observes, that unlike our times the historians and writers of the first century, "were not interested simply in reporting events of the past, but saw their role as providing the meaning of those past events for readers in the present."[53] Therefore, during these sixty years or so, the Gospels were developed, in the words of Paula Fredricksen, "from oral to written; from Aramaic to Greek; from the End of time to the middle of time; from Jewish to Gentile; from Galilee and Judea to the Empire..."[54]

From the facts like these of oral transmission, Easter experience, missionary zeal, and compilation of Jesus's sayings after a period of 30 to 60 years, many modern scholars doubt the authenticity and integrity of most of the New Testament books. Ernst Kaesemann argues, that "the individual sayings and stories it must be said that from their first appearance they were used in the service of the community's preaching and were indeed preserved for the very reason. It was not historical but kerygmatic interest which handed them on. From this standpoint it becomes comprehensible that this tradition, or at least the overwhelming mass of it, cannot be called authentic. Only a few words of the Sermon on the Mount and of the conflict with the Pharisees, a number of parables, and some scattered material of various kinds go back with any real degree of probability to the Jesus of history...The preaching about him has almost entirely supplanted his own preaching, as can be seen most clearly of all in the completely unhistorical Gospel of John."[55] John Hick claims that, "The identifiable consensus begins with a distinction between the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the post-Easter development of the church's mingled memories and interpretations of him. And it is a basic premise of modern New Testament scholarship that we have access to the former only through the latter."[56]

G. Zuntz has observed that people of the old times time had a different attitude towards the text of an author, an attitude altogether different from that of ours in the modern times: "an attitude of mind almost the opposite of that which, at the time, prevailed among Christians of all classes and all denominations. The common respect for the sacredness of the Word, with them, was not an incentive to preserve the text in its original purity. On the contrary, the strange fact has long since been observed that devotion to the founder and His apostles did not prevent the Christians of that age from interfering with their transmitted utterances. The reliance of the believers upon the continuing action of the Spirit easily led them to regard the letter less highly; the two appeared to be at variance, the urge to interpolate what was felt to be true was not always resisted."[57] Bultmann has claimed that the early Church did neither perceive nor make a distinction between the pre-Easter sayings of Jesus and the post-Easter utterances of Christian prophets which were accepted as the words of the Risen Lord and were, sometimes intentionally and others unintentionally, retrojected into Jesus' mouth or into settings in Jesus earthly life.[58] Martin Dibelius has discussed the issue in detail.[59] M.E. Boring has made a case that a substantial number of early Christian prophet's sayings found their way into Synoptic Gospels.[60] H. Boers argues that, "The question of whether a particular saying was actually pronounced by Jesus in not only impossible to answer but, from the point of view of the developing Christian religion, irrelevant. What was important about Jesus for the developing Christian religion was not so much the concrete facts of his life but the impact he had made on his followers, as reflected in the tradition of his life and teachings and in the legends of his birth and childhood."[61] Thus, in the opinion of scholars like Boring and Boers, there was a great chasm fixed between what Jesus viewed and presented himself and the way early church interpreted him as Christ, Lord, or Son of God. It is possible then to perceive that these books are merely interpretations of the Christ event and do not give us the exact and accurate information about what Jesus preached about himself and what he really was. Therefore, to H. Conzelmann, "The historical and substantive presupposition for modern research into the life of Jesus is emancipation from traditional Christological dogma on the basis of the principle of reason."[62]

On the other hand, there are scholars who view the matter differently. To them, the early Christians were no innovators. I. H. Marshall argues: "It is clear that the basic sayings of Jesus was *modified* both in the tradition and by the Evangelists in order to re-express its significance for new situations; it is by no means obvious that this basic tradition was created by the early church. Similarly, it is unlikely that the stories about Jesus and the narrative setting for his teaching are [all] products of the church's *Sitz im Leben*. The fact that such material was found to be congenial for use in the church's situation is no proof it was created for this purpose."[63] Richard A. Burridge, who has carefully discussed the biographical genre of the Gospels by comparing it with the other forms of biographies from the Graeco-Roman world,[64] argues that "If the early church had not been interested in the person and earthly life of Jesus, it would not have produced *Bioi*, with their narrative structure and chronological framework, but discourses of the risen Christ, like the Gnostic `gospels', instead."[65] Bilezikian argues that "the very existence of the Gospel, and that of Matthew and Luke after Mark, bears witness to the importance attached to the historical Jesus by the early church."[66] Some of these scholars argue that Jesus used various mnemonic devices to make his teachings memorable as well as memorizable.[67] In Jeremias and M. Black's opinion, there had been a relatively fixed Aramaic tradition from an early date behind much of Jesus's saying

material present in the Gospels, which in the case of Synoptics, seems authentic to Jeremias. "Nevertheless, we can say in conclusion that the linguistic and stylistic evidence... shows so much faithfulness and such respect towards the tradition of the sayings of Jesus that we are justified in drawing up the following principle of method: In the synoptic tradition it is the inauthenticity, and not the authenticity, of the sayings of Jesus that must be demonstrated."[68] (Many scholars do not share Jeremias's optimism). After discussing the matter at length, Black has concluded: "For the sayings and teachings of Jesus, however, there is little doubt that the bulk of Semitisms are translation phenomena and have arisen in the process of translating and paraphrasing the *verba ipsisima* of Jesus....I have seen no reason to change the conclusions which I reached in my *Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* that an Aramaic tradition (oral or written) lies behind the sayings of Jesus (in the Fourth Gospel as well as the Synoptics."[69] W. D. Davies has stressed that the Jewish milieu of the earliest traditions and the special reverence that Jesus enjoyed in the community would have made his words and deeds probably exercise a conserving and conservative influence on the tradition.[70] Hengel observed, that "The earliest stage was not the isolated individual tradition, but the elemental wealth of impressions called forth by meteoric appearance of Jesus. Then still during Jesus' lifetime, there began a process of collection which at the same time meant selection and restriction."[71] G. Hughes argued, that "for those who lived as contemporaries with the transmission process, there was a genuine possibility of testing the information given by the writer... over against the traditions, [which are] the public property of the community within which the traditions have been received...; but this implies, in turn, that his [the biblical writer's] picture of Jesus is not at his beck and call but is subject to some degree of historical scrutiny."[72]

Birger Gerhardsson has discussed the issue at length. He argued, that "During the first four centuries of our era the oral Torah tradition of the Jewish rabbis grew enormously. And it was still being handed down orally. If one wonders how it was possible for such a huge body of text material to be preserved and passed on orally, one must consider the rabbis' pedagogical methods and technique employed in oral transmission."[73] He pinpointed methods like memorization, text and commentary, didactic and poetic devices, repetition, recitation and art of writing as instrumental in this aspect.[74] From here he contended that "Jesus taught in parables and logia, in all probability he taught his hearers these texts... Jesus presented *meshalim* for his hearers, and the disciples were the first to memorize them, to ponder them, and to discuss together what they meant."[75] Therefore, he claims, that "there is a historical justification, based on sound historical judgments, for concluding that there is an unbroken path which leads from Jesus' teaching in *meshalim* to the early church's methodical handing on of Jesus texts, a transmission carried on for *its own sake*."[76] On the basis of this background he asserted that, "we are entitled to established one thing: in Paul's time early Christianity is conscious of the fact that it has a *tradition* of its own-including many *traditions*- which the church leaders hand on to the congregations, which the congregations receive, and which they are to guard and live after. In Paul's times there exists a *conscious, deliberate, and programmatic* transmission in the early Church."[77] He also observed that "early Christianity nonetheless had a genuine interest in the past, and a natural feeling for the fact that ancestors and generations before no longer live here on earth... Furthermore, early Christianity had a special reason for being interested in one specific aspect of the past: that which concerned Jesus of Nazareth... they wrote about his work in Israel during an era which lies in the past. It is not true that they give free, concrete expression to their faith in the heavenly Lord, and

to their answers "in Christ's Spirit" to contemporary questions, by creating myths about what he says to the congregations today."[78] Hence, "the early Christians preserved the memory of a distinct segment of past history and feel their dependence on it. Thus the problems of the young Christian congregations have *colored* the material, but not *created* it. This looking back upon Jesus' earthly ministry is an essential factor in the early Christian tradition formation right from the very beginning."[79] He concludes, arguing that, "It thus seems historically very probable that the Jesus traditions in the Gospels have been preserved for us by men both reliable and well informed."[80] He further argued that "one must proceed on the belief that the Synoptic material in principle comes from the earthly Jesus and the disciples who followed him during his ministry, but that one must also do full justice to the fact that this memory material has been marked by the insights and interpretations gradually arrived at by the early Christian teachers."[81]

The space does not allow us to discuss Gerhardsson's thesis in detail. It may suffice to quote E. P. Sanders who has shown that "the Christian tradition-at least in Papias' generation-was not passed down and spread in the systematic manner which Gerhrdsson describes as having taken place in Rabbinic Judaism. In sum, then, we see that there were probably significant differences between the Christian and Jewish method of transmission, although there may also have been significant similarities."[82]

In short, to this group of scholars, the Gospel material is not inauthentic, and there is no great gulf between historical Jesus' sayings and the post-Easter portrayal of him in the Gospels. R. H. Fuller argues, that "the only difference between the message of Jesus and the Church's Kerygma is that Jesus proclaims that *God is about to act* decisively and eschatologically in him, the kerygma proclaims that *God has so acted.*"[83] M. de Jonge writes: "Jesus is at the center of all early (and later) Christology. This presupposes some degree of continuity between what he said and did and people's reactions. It also presupposes some continuity between the situation of his followers before Jesus' cross and resurrection and their situation after those events."[84] L. H. Hurtado writes: "a key factor that must be taken into account in understanding the rise of early Christian devotion to Jesus is the pre-Easter ministry of Jesus and its effects upon his followers."[85] Ben Witherington agrees with this point of view, at least in connection with the Synoptics. He concludes: "Thus, the alleged chasm between the speech event of the historical Jesus and the post-Easter speaking about Jesus probably never existed."[86] Though he recognizes that " through the Easter experiences a new horizon of understanding was opened up."[87]

From an historical perspective it may be observed, that there is no proof of any written collection of the original Aramaic sayings of Jesus or any notes or Gospel. E. G. Goodspeed has discussed the matter regarding the original language of the Gospels at length and concluded like many others, that "Certain it is that from the time Christianity really entered the Greek world it instinctively went about recording itself in writing-first letters, and then books."[88] There is also no proof that the disciples took notes of Jesus' sayings, or tried to preserve it verbatim or in any other systematic way such as those used by the rabbinical Judaism. E. P. Sanders has already shown that any such supposition could not be substantiated by historical facts. The sheer fact of different compositions and structures of Jesus' sayings and their early Greek translations demonstrate the validity of the assertion. Martin Dibelius' "From Tradition to Gospels", Bultmann's "History of the Synoptic Tradition", and E.P. Sanders' "The Tendencies of the

Synoptic Tradition" are still useful references to elaborate the point.[89] The earliest Christian literature i.e., Paul's letters, as we shall see later in the chapter, contain virtually nothing but a very few of Jesus' sayings. Even B. Gerhardsson recognizes that "It is certain that Paul does not quote the earthly Jesus very often in his Epistles, nor does he discuss such material."[90] The Gospel writers are far away from Jesus' own times and wrote at places where Jesus' disciples or contemporaries were virtually absent. The writers acceptance of Jesus as Lord and giving him central position in their writings do not necessarily mean the authenticity of their accounts regarding him. This fact becomes more evident when looked from the perspective of the time distance and the gulf that lies between Jesus and the early Christian writers.

On the other hand, it does not seem plausible that the early Church concocted the entire situation without having any base in the tradition or historical Jesus. Arthur Drews, William B. Smith, and Well's theories of non-existence of Jesus are mere guess works. They are contrary to the genuinely reliable Christian and non-Christian historical writings about the existence of Jesus.[91] The earliest Christian writers, argues C.F.D. Moule, "were probably already heirs to a considerable body of tradition."[92] There were probably oral traditions circulating in the community regarding Jesus' virgin birth, miracles, and preaching. These traditions were selected, colored, modified and added to in light of the Easter experience or kerygma. It may suffice to quote here G. N. Stanton who comments: "Perhaps we will never know *precisely* the influences at work in the earliest christological reflections of the church. To claim that the christological beliefs of the primitive church have not left their mark upon the gospel traditions would be to fly in the face of clear evidence to the contrary. But we may be sure that traditions about the life and character of Jesus played an important part not only in the preaching of the primitive church, but also in its christological reflection: both began with Jesus of Nazareth."[93] It must be added here that the historical Jesus of Nazareth may be the beginning point for the primitive church, but by no means identical to what the church, later on, preached about him. Howard C. Kee probably is right when he observes, that "What we are dealing with in the gospel tradition is not objective historical evidence that has become overlaid with the claims of Christian faith, but with the evidence that in its entirety stems from the witness of faith at various stages of development."[94]

In the middle of all these developments, one can try to locate the basic realities connected with the earthly life of Jesus overlaid with kerygmatic interpretations and mythical portrayals. A scholar of the New Testament, who is well versed in the cultural context of these writings and the first century Jewish and Hellenistic thought, can possibly determine these facts by peeling off the mythical layers. In the past scholars used to argue that we knew virtually nothing about the historical Jesus. This kind of trend had been characteristic of the period between 1910-1970, and presently has given way to a more positive approach since then. E. P. Sanders observes that "in recent decades we have grown more confident."[95] J. K. Riches discusses the basis of such a confidence: "What is the basis of such confidence, which is still not shared by all? In the first place it rests on a conviction that we do know that Jesus lived and died and that we know at least certain basic facts about his life with at least as much confidence as we could know similar facts about any other figure in ancient history. Compared with many ancient historians, New Testament scholars are in a relatively fortunate position. The second factor is a greater confidence in our ability to understand Jesus' social world, the world of first-century Judaism and its various renewal movements. This is obviously significant."[96] Sanders claims that now "There are no

substantial doubts about the general course of Jesus' life: when and where he lived, approximately when and where he died, and the sort of thing he did during his public activity."[97] Many modern scholars like Hick, James Dunn, N.T. Wright, J.L. Houlden and Riches would agree with most parts of this description.[98]

This does not mean, however, as Riches warns, that "there is any consensus, either about the way Jesus is to be situated within his Jewish context, or indeed about the most appropriate way of the undertaking the task."[99] Paul Badham explains that "This does not mean that modern scholarship endorses every aspect of the traditional picture of Jesus. Historical and literary criticism constantly reminds us of the inevitable limits of our knowledge as we look back over long centuries. But whereas an earlier generation of scholars tended to say that unless we know something for certain we should not claim to know it at all, the modern view recognizes that uncertainty is present in all historical reconstructions of the past and need be no bar to reasonable confidence in what seems the most probable interpretation of what lies behind the narrative."[100] John Hick reminds us that "Scholars have listed such generally agreed points as that Jesus was a Galilean Jew, son of a woman called Mary; that he was baptized by John the Baptist; that he preached and healed and exorcized; that he called disciples and spoke of there being twelve; that he largely confined his activity to Israel; that he was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities; and that after his death his followers continued as an identifiable movement. Beyond this an unavoidable element of conjectural interpretation goes into our mental pictures of Jesus."[101] This tells us how limited our knowledge is about historical Jesus. It may suffice to quote again Howard Kee, who observes that, "Although they [the Gospel writers] did not share the contemporary fondness for facticity, they did believe that the transcendent meaning in one whom they now called Lord and Christ had its point of historical origin in someone whom they or their immediate predecessors in the Christian faith had known, seen, and heard (see 1 John 1:1; Luke 1:2)-a man known as Jesus of Nazareth. Is it Possible that this man, to whom such great deeds and such exalted meaning were attributed, never existed?"[102]

It seems obvious by now to establish the point, that kerygmatic interpretations of the Christ-event are at the very foundation of the Gospels. This orientation, argues Hans Kung, "and peculiar character of the Gospels do not merely render impossible a biography of Jesus. They make any dispassionate, historical interpretation of the texts more difficult. Of course no serious scholar assumes today, as people did at the beginning of Gospel criticism, that the disciples deliberately falsified the story of Jesus. They did not arbitrarily invent his deeds and words. They were simply convinced that they now knew better than in Jesus' lifetime who he really was and what he really signified. Hence they had no hesitation in following the custom of the time and placing everything that had to be said in regard to him under his personal authority: both by putting certain sayings into his mouth and by shaping certain stories in the light of his image as a whole."[103] J. D. Crossan argues, that "The Gospels are neither histories nor biographies even within the ancient tolerances for those genres. They are what they were eventually called, Gospels or good newses, and thereby comes a double warning. "Good" is always such within some individual's or community's opinion or interpretation. And "news" is not a word we usually pluralize again as "newses"."[104]

H. Riesenfeld's arguments of the rigid formulation and careful memorization of early Christian traditions, analogous to that of the Jewish method of that time, does not seem convincing in the

light of a long period of mere oral transmission and the freedom with which material was handled by the earliest Christian community.[105] Stephen Neill observes, that "No one is likely to deny that a tradition which is being handed on by word of mouth will undergo modification. This is bound to happen, unless the tradition has been rigidly formulated, and has been learned by heart with careful safeguards against the intrusion of error. Most of us would, I think, be inclined to agree that, in the story of the coin in the fish's mouth, and of Peter walking on the water in Matthew 14, an element of imaginative enlargement has at some point or other been added to the original tradition. Again, the variation of the forms in which sayings of Jesus appear, as between one Gospel and another, suggests that there was freedom of interpretation, even in this most sacred area of the tradition, which did not demand exact verbal fidelity." Neill continues, "But there is a vast difference between recognition of this kind of flexibility, of this creative working of the community on existing traditions, and the idea that the community simply invented and read back into the life of Jesus things that he had never done, and words that he had never said. When carried to its extreme, this method suggests that the anonymous community had far greater creative power than the Jesus of Nazareth, faith in whom had called the community into being."[106]

Moreover, the theological interests have always played a vital role in the transmission of Christian texts.[107] The first century of transmission is no exception as Helmut Koester observes: "The problems for the reconstruction of the textual history of the canonical Gospels in the first century of transmission are immense.... Textual critics of classical texts know that the first century of their transmission is the period in which the most serious corruptions occured. Textual critics of the New Testament writings have been surprisingly naive in this respect."[108] Origen, in the Second Century, had to do a great deal of textual criticism. Bigg observes that "He devoted much time and labor to the text of the New Testament, which was already disfigured by corruptions, `some arising from the carelessness of scribes, some from the evil licence of emendation, some from arbitrary omissions or interpolations.' Already the records were perverted in numberless passages..."[109] Commenting on theological insertions and forgeries in the text, an expert in church history has concluded that "Under such circumstances the preservation of any authentic texts seems almost miraculous. The needs of dogmatic theology were undisturbed by much historical sense. [By c. 600] they had resulted in distortion of the historical materials on which theology was supposedly built. The absence of any understanding of historical development allowed genuine and false documents to be so thoroughly mixed that they would not be disentangled for more than a millennium."[110] In the opinion of R.L. Fox "A critical history of Christian thought could not possibly begin to have been written until after 1500 because of forgeries by Christians themselves. The same danger besets the New Testament."[111]

If we look at these comments in light of the crucial differences between The Revised Version of the Bible and the King James Version over several theologically important passages such as, 1 John 5:7-8, it becomes evident that the theological interests have caused several insertions into the text of the New Testament after it had been canonized, declared the Divine Scripture and the Word of God. Fox rightly observes that "There is a thin and difficult line between a saying (perhaps largely authentic) which Christians inserted into an existing Gospel and those sayings which a Gospeller ascribed implausibly to Jesus himself."[112] If this has been the situation with the text after it had been declared the Word of God and warnings of severe punishment had been given at the end of the Canon (in Revelation 22:18-19: "If any man shall add unto these things,

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."), what about oral traditions and their text in the first century when it was not even taken as the Holy Scripture?

In the first century Christian Church, the terms 'Holy Scriptures', the 'Divine Oracles' or the 'Holy Word' were implied only for the Old Testament. The words of Jesus were prefaced with the words "the words of our Lord Jesus" or "the Lord saith". The evident example of this tendency among the first century Christians is that of the so called first Epistle of Clement of Rome. Scholars have shown that it is "an authentic production of the Church of Rome in about A.D. 96."[113] "If this dating and identification are accepted", writes S. Neill, "as they are by almost all scholars today, we are brought even nearer to the world of the New Testament."[114] In this Epistle the writer always alludes to the Old Testament as the Holy Scriptures but, as observes Grant, "never refers to the New Testament writings as scripture."[115] Fox summarizes the situation in the following words: "This anonymous letter twice refers directly to `words of the Lord Jesus', but neither reference is an exact quotation of a saying found in any one of our Gospels. The author is also unaware of any written New Testament and restrained in his use of scripture. He urged Corinth to consult its epistle from the 'blessed apostle Paul' and apparently alluded elsewhere to other Pauline epistles, as if he already knew them in a collection. He certainly knew our Epistle to the Hebrews, though not its anonymous author. However when he mentioned Paul's Romans 1:29, he continued with quotation from Psalm 50, introduced by the phrase 'For the scripture says...' It seems that Paul's epistles were not quite the same as scripture in his mind: it is striking that he quotes clusters of sayings from Jesus only twice, whereas he referred over a hundred times to verses in Hebrew scripture. Christianity, for this author, is certainly not yet a 'religion of the book' with its own closed body of texts."[116]

Geisler and Nix disagree with such a depiction of the Epistle of Clement of Rome. They argue, that "This contains several quotations from the New Testament, including the synoptic gospels. His citations are more precise than those attributed to Barnabas, but they still lack modern precision."[117] What Geisler and Nix recognize by "lack of modern precision" is exactly the point raised by the scholars of "form criticism". Concerning the issue of precision, John Ferguson observes even about Clement of Alexandria, that "He turns next to New Testament and can still startle us by throwing in a phrase from Homer in the middle of his scriptural citations."[118]

The earliest Christian writings are that of St. Paul as Bornkamm and others have shown.[119] Bornkamm argues, that "All the letters, without exception, were composed towards the end of his career and within a relatively short span of time. They cover a period of no more than six or seven years when he worked as a missionary before being taken prisoner on his last visit to Jerusalem (ca. A.D. 56-57), after which he probably died a martyr's death in Rome in the early sixties, during the reign of Nero."[120] A. Schweitzer observes that for these letters "we have to place a period of about twelve years, which are probably the years A.D. 52-64, but possibly from 50-62, if not still earlier."[121] Modern scholarship agrees with dating genuine Pauline letters between 49-62 as T.G.A. Baker has shown.[122]

It is interesting to note that in his writings, Paul is quite silent about the historical settings which seem to be fundamental to the whole gospel narrative of Jesus' life and he does not quote from Jesus but once. H. Anderson rightly observes that "if Paul were our only source, we would know nothing of Jesus' parables, the Sermon on the Mount, or the Lord's prayer."[123] Victor P. Furnish observes that "It is striking, however, how little use the apostle actually makes of Jesus' teachings. For example, he invokes none of the parables which later on were given such prominence in the Synoptic Gospels. Moreover, he has very little to say about the Reign of God, even though that is fundamental theme in both the sayings and parable traditions. True, not all of Paul's letters have survived, and we have no transcripts of his actual preaching. Yet the sources we do have probably give us an accurate picture... Paul focuses his attention neither on the teachings of Jesus nor on Jesus' Palestinian ministry. His attention is focused, rather, on Jesus the crucified Messiah and the risen Lord."[124] John Hick observes that "Paul fits Jesus into his own theology without little regard to the historical figure."[125]

Burridge, on the other hand, argues that "Because Paul says little about the person of Jesus in his epistles does not necessarily mean that he was not interested in his earthly ministry; it might be because he is writing epistles and not *Bioi*."[126] It is beyond the scope of this treatise to discuss how far the Gospels could be treated as the *Bioi*. Whatever the case, it highlights the fact that the parables, sayings of Jesus or the Gospels were neither transmitted in a rigid, organized or systematic method nor written or accepted as the Holy Scriptures in the Christian circles of the middle first century. This complete silence on the part of Paul, observes Grasser, "is an unexplained riddle."[127] Francois Bovon argues that "We must learn to consider the gospels of the New Testament canon, in the form in which they existed before 180 C.E., in the same light in which we consider the apocrypha. At this earlier time the gospels were what the apocrypha never ceased to be. Like the apocrypha, the gospels of the New Testament were not yet canonical; they did not circulate together [for example, only Luke and John are present in Papyrus 45], and when they did, they did not always appear in the same sequence [for example, the order Matthew, John, Luke, Mark in Codex Bezae]."[128]

The Gospel's composition and collection were not the end of oral tradition of Jesus' sayings.[129] It can be traced until well into the second century, in the Apostolic Fathers, and perhaps in Justin, who of course knew and used gospel writings. M. Wiles observes that "For a long time, even after many of the New Testament writings had been written, the method of oral transmission continued to be regarded as the basic way in which the substance of the Christian Gospel was to be learned and passed on. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor in the first half of the second century, is not unrepresentative of his age in preferring to the written record of books a living and abiding voice, a continuous chain of remembered teaching which could be traced back to 'the commandments given by the Lord to faith, and reaching us from the Truth himself'. The overall picture to be found in the writings of Justin Martyr and the other apologists contemporary with him is fundamentally similar; their conception of Christianity is the teaching of Jesus spreading its way around the world through the medium of the preaching first of the apostles and then of those who came after them."[130] Papias of Heirapolis (about 130-140), who has been credited with being the author of "*Exposition of the Lord's Oracles*" which "survives in fragments only",[131] states what is thought to be a classical example of the continued exaltation of oral tradition: "I did not think that I could get so much from the contents of books as from the utterances of the living and

abiding voice."[132] In short "the general illiteracy of the first Christians, the expectation of an imminent parousia, and the high regard for Spirit-inspired prophetic utterance together ensured that the first generation of Christians would be itinerant, charismatic-type prophetic figures rather than scholarly authors of written works. Their social circumstances and their activity mutually served to prevent their producing written works."[133]

When the Gospel literature started to be compiled, it was perhaps Mark who took the initiative.[134] In fact, observes Burridge, "out of 661 verses in Mark's gospel, around 90 per cent occur in Matthew too, and about half are also in Luke."[135] The old hypothesis that Mark made use of Matthew and Luke was challenged by Lachmann in 1835 in his article on *"De Ordine Narrationum in Evangeliis Synoptics" "The Order of the Narration of Events in the Synoptic Gospels"*.[136] Hermann Weisse (1801-66) furthered it by two acutely penetrating remarks i.e., the fuller account of various events in Mark than that in Matthew and Luke and Mark's addition of vivid touches. He further observed that Matthew and Luke must have made use of another written collection of Jesus' sayings from which much of the material common between them was derived. Here, in Weisse, S. Neill finds, "in embryo the `Two-Source' theory of composition of the Gospels, which at the end of the century was to hold the field."[137] B. H. Streeter (1874-1937) developed a "Four-document" theory of the origins of the Gospels. He argued that "It is assumed that a hypothesis which reduces the number of sources to a minimum is more scientific... But a plurality of sources is historically more probable. In particular, if Mark is the old Roman Gospel, it is antecedently to be expected that the other Gospels conserve the specific traditions of Jerusalem, Caesarea and Antioch."[138]

By the end of the century the priority of Mark and of the "Two-source" theory was looked as the assured results of the critical approach to the New Testament and, in the words of Riches, "the investment of the discipline as a whole in the hypothesis is enormous: any attempts to replace it with an alternative view meet with sustained opposition and, to date, little success."[139] By 1919 Martin Dibelius could write " the two-source theory is better able than any other to explain the synoptic problem."[140] Burridge observes that "the current consensus among gospel scholars about the complex overlapping between the gospels is that Mark wrote first; Matthew and Luke used Mark and another source, 'Q', plus their own material; and that John was written independently of the other three, probably last of all."[141] It is worth mentioning here E.P. Sanders' words of caution who argues that "The evidence does not seem to warrant the degree of certainty with which many scholars hold the two-document hypothesis."[142] Mark is said to have been written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem between the years 65 and 75 A.D. as Baker contends[143] or by the end of the seventies as Crossan argues;[144] Matthew around 90 A.D. and Luke as early as nineties, most probably A.D. 85[145] (both after the destruction).[146] By comparison with the Synoptics, the Gospel of John, observes Hans Kung, "has a completely different character in both the literary and theological sense... Undoubtedly too it was the last Gospel to be written (as David Friedrich Strauss discovered early in the nineteenth century). It could have been written about the year 100."[147] The earliest extant fragment, argues Crossan, "of John is dated to about 125. C.E."[148]

In addition to late compilation of the Gospels, when the Christian literature started to be compiled it was not only the books later regarded as canonical that were in circulation or accepted as authoritative. Luke's beginning verse pinpoints the situation. "Forasmuch as many have taken in

hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent The-oph-i-lus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (Lk. 1:1-4) There were quite a few other gospels, like the Gospel of the Hebrews which according to Jerome, some called it "the true Matthew", the Gospel According to the Egyptians, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas[149] and the Gospel of Philip, The Gospel of the Ebionites, and others,[150] which were in circulation too. Helmut Koester summarized the situation in the following words: "the number of gospels in circulation must have been much larger, at least a good dozen of which we at least have some pieces, and everybody could and did rewrite, edit, revise, and combine, however he saw fit."[151] Some of these Gospels were frequently quoted by the early fathers like Clement and Papias and were later declared Apocryphal or unlawful. Fox observes that "At the turn of the century, the Christian intellectual Clement of Alexandria still cited the Gospel of the Egyptians and interpreted a saying of Jesus from it, although he knew very well that it was not one of four."[152]

On the whole, then, it can be stated that during the first half of the second century, the four Gospels of our present New Testament and other Christian literature like Paul's epistles were there, but the idea of a close canon or New Testament was not present. No doubt the traces of the idea of a Christian Scripture steadily became clearer during this period and the presuppositions of the formation of the canon can be evaluated. But the crystal clear idea of the Christian canon was not the work of orthodoxy but a reaction and response to the pressure of heretics like Marcion, Montanists and Gnostics and their heretical teachings. As B. M. Metzger observed: "Various external circumstances assisted in the process of canonization of the New Testament books. The emergence of heretical sects having their own sacred books made it imperative for the church to determine the limits of the canon."[153]

The great majority of New Testament scholars, especially since the last century (after the works of D. de Bruyne and A. von Harnack were published), have argued that Marcion was responsible for creating the canon. Marcion in his book 'Antitheses' contrasted his own ethical dualism (as has been discussed earlier in chapter 2), as based on New Testaments texts, with other New Testament texts and with passages from the Old Testament. He rejected the Old Testament altogether and set up a list of writings to be recognized as Scripture by his followers. It was comprised of a form of the Gospel of Luke and 10 of the Pauline Epistles (excluding the three Pastoral Epistles). The mainstream Church could not accept this short canon and as a reaction was forced to define more carefully the list of books that it recognized as Divine Scriptures.

J.N.D. Kelly, on the other hand, disagrees with Harnack and others by observing that "The significance of Marcion's action should not be misunderstood. He has sometimes been acclaimed (e.g. by the great German scholar Harnack) as the originator of the Catholic canon, but this is an extravagant point of view. The Church already had its roughly defined collection, or (to be more precise) collections, of Christian books which, as we have seen, it was beginning to treat as Scripture. The Lord's sayings, as the use of them by St. Paul and the early fathers testifies, had been treasured from the beginning, and about 150 we find Justin familiar with all four gospels (the 'memoirs of the apostles', as he calls them), and mentioning their use in the weekly service. If it is

too much to say that they already formed a corpus, they were well on the way to doing so...Ignatius, for example, states that the Apostle makes mention of the Ephesians `in every letter'; and Polycarp's citations from them indicate that such a collection existed at Smyrna. There are numerous apparent echoes of them in Clement which perhaps indicate that he was acquainted with the nucleus of one as early as 95. It is altogether more probable, therefore, that when he formulated his *Apostolicum,* as when he singled out the Third Gospel, Marcion was revising a list of books currently in use in the Church than proposing such a list for the first time."[154] Professor Kelly fails to prove the point in discussion i.e., the Church's own initiative in canonizing the Christian books with the exclusion of many others. Moreover, he himself recognizes the fact by observing: "Nevertheless, if the idea of a specifically Christian canon was deeply rooted in the Church's own convictions and practice, Marcion played an important part in the practical emergence of one. What none of the great ecclesiastical centers, so far as we know, had done, and what his initiative seems to have provoked them to do, was to delimit their lists of authorized Christian books in a public, official way. The influence of Montanism...worked in the same direction."[155]

Furthermore, as already observed by Kelly, the Montanist controversy[156] of the "Spirit" was another factor in narrowing down the list of divine writings. In the early Christian congregations the Spirit had been accorded a central role. When the Montanists tried to exploit this belief in the Spirit to rationalize some of their extravagant assertions, the Church emphasized the authority of the written Word (the Scriptures) to counter them.

A decisive element in the canonization process of the New Testament was the combat during the second century with another group called `Gnostics'. This group claimed to have a special knowledge of what Jesus really taught. They asserted that the ordinary Christian teachings were what Jesus and the disciples had taught publicly. They have what Jesus taught his close associates in private. To refute their claims and occult teachings, the Church focused on the sacred writings and their apostolic authority.

The first list which has come down to us from the Church is what is called "Muratorian" fragment, in Kelly's words "Late second century in date and authoritative in tone".[157] It was previously thought of as a second century Western text and is nowadays thought to represent a fourth-century Eastern text. It was first published by Milanese scholar L. A. Muratori (1672-1750) in 1740.[158] From this and other ancient manuscripts like Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, it becomes manifest that until the third and fourth century, the limits of the canon were regarded by all as fluid. These old manuscripts included in their New Testament some works like Hermas' "The Shepherd" and the "Epistle of Barnabas" which are no more a part of our present New Testament, while omitting some of the canonical ones like Epistles of James, the Epistles of Peter and the Hebrews. Eusebius of Caesarea (d.340) who is important as a witness to the state of canon in various Christian communities, classified the Christian writings into three categories. (1) *Homologoumena* "agreed upon" i.e. books universally accepted. These were the four Gospels, Acts, a fourteen-item Pauline corpus, 1 Peter, 1 John, and "if it seems correct," Revelation; (2) *Antilegomena* "the disputed" i.e. the books whose canonicity is disputed. Under this he lists five of the seven Catholic Epistles i.e. Epistle of James, Jude, second Epistle of Peter and the second and third Epistles of John. These are accepted by the

majority and rejected by a minority. A subset of the "disputed" ones is not accepted by the majority. They are the Acts of Paul, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Letter of Barnabas, the Didache and "if it seems correct" Revelation; (3) *The atopa pante kai dusebe*, "the altogether absurd and impious works". Most of the apocryphal gospels are listed under this category.[159] It was Athanasius's Easter letter of 367 that settled the discussion of the internal limits of the New Testament canon within the Eastern church yet not with absolute success. In the fourth century Hebrews was generally accepted in the East and rejected in the West. The Apocalypse was generally accepted in the West and rejected in the East.

The canon in the West was closed in the fifth century under the influence of St. Augustine and Jerome. For the Greek church in the East the question was settled by Constantine. He ordered Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the Scriptures to be used in the new capital. In this way the 27 New Testament books included in these copies obtained a semi-official recognition. The Syrian church still had some reservations about 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude, and Revelation. The fifth-century Syrian Jacobite manuscript Peshitta contained only 22 books. In the sixth and seventh century the influence of the Vulgate and Constantinople prevailed and all 27 books of New Testament were recognized in the church. The Western Syrian Bible of the sixth and seventh century, the Philoxenian and Harklian versions, contained the same twenty- seven books accepted in the East as well as in the West though the Eastern Syrian Church, observes Metzger, "having lost contact with the rest of Christendom, continued much longer to hold to the shorter canon."[160]

Though the issue of New Testament canon was settled in the fifth century, Eusebius's distinction between "*homologoemena*" and "*antilegomena*" did not disappear completely from the Church. During the middle ages Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles except 1 Peter and 1 John were still the subject of some controversy. Luther, for instance, severely censured Hebrews, Jude, 2 Peter and called James "a straw epistle". He relegated some other canonical books to second place. In spite of these differences, all the Catholic as well as Protestant New Testament copies contain all 27 canonical writings.

It is important to note here with Kelly that "The main point to be observed is that the fixation of the finally agreed list of books, and of the order in which they were to be arranged, was the result of a very gradual process...By gradual stages, however, the Church both in East and West arrived at a common mind as its sacred books. The first official document which prescribes the twenty-seven books of our New Testament as alone canonical is Athanasius's Easter Letter for the year 367, but the process was not everywhere complete until at least a century and a half later."[161] Now when we read the New Testament as a book we are reading, as R.L. Fox puts it, "a list of books which some of the Christian's bishops approved and asserted more than three hundred years after Jesus's death...Three centuries are a very long time: do these late listings really create a unity with such an authority that it directs our understanding?"[162] Obviously, it would be implausible to cite the protection, guidance and comforting work of the Holy Spirit to the exclusion of human beings with all their human limitations behind the very letters of the New Testament books. Fox argues that "Even an atheist can see the difference between one of the turgid or most sectarian alternative Gospels and one of the recognized four: as for the others, even early Christians who respected our four could quote sayings from some of the other Gospels too. As for the rest of the New Testament, it was never agreed definitively, unless the entire Syriac, Ethiopic and Greek

Orthodox Churches are disqualified from a share in the Holy Spirit, along with the bulk of those Christians who wrote in Greek throughout the first seven centuries of Church history and made such subtle contributions to Christian theology."[163]

Therefore, the only solid conclusion one could reach is that the authors, compilers, and canonizers were after all just human beings. In addition, it is pertinent to note here with S. Neill that "Whatever view we may hold of the inspiration of the New Testament, we are bound to admit that it has been immune from none of the chances, the perils, and the corruption's which have assailed all other manuscript traditions of similar length."[164] He further argues that "In regard to the text of almost all ancient authors this is certain that none of them presents what the author himself can possibly have written...We cannot rule out the possibility that the same may be true of the New Testament, and that in certain passages, which are likely to be very few, nothing but the inspired guesswork will take us back to the original."[165] Just the expressions Canonical writings or Canon of Scriptures, in the words of Matthew Arnold, "recall a time when degrees of value were still felt, and all parts of the Bible did not stand on the same footing, and were not taken equally. There was a time when books were read as part of the Bible which are no Bible now; there was a time when books which are in every Bible now, were by many disallowed as genuine parts of the Bible... And so far from their finally getting where they now are after a through trial of their claims, and with indisputable propriety, they got placed there by the force of circumstances, by chance or by routine, rather than on their merits."[166] It is not that once the Canon was established no body had any problems with it. But "the whole discussion died out, not because the matter was sifted and settled and a perfect Canon of Scripture deliberately formed; it died out as medieval ignorance deepened, and because there was no longer knowledge or criticism enough left in the world to keep such a discussion alive."[167]

Since the eighteenth century onward, the discussion has once again been made alive, though its emphasis and tone is a little different.

Contemporary Christian Standpoint:

Christians are divided on the issue of their Scripture's origin and authority. Some Christians, particularly in some Evangelical traditions, advocate infallibility, inerrancy and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Their logic is palpable. If God is the Omniscient, the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent and is the author of the scriptural text, then it follows that the text be free of mistakes and errors whether in content or form. If it is found to contain some errors, through some unintentional or indiscernible will of its authors, it remains problematic that the Omniscient and Omnipotent God should be content to allow errors to have come to existence in His written work.

According to B.B. Warfield, one of the staunch exponents of Scriptural Inerrancy, scriptures are, " not as man's report to us of what God says, but as the very Word of God itself, spoken by God himself through human lips and pens."[168] He further argues that each word of the text is "at one and the same time the consciously self-chosen word of the writer and the divinely-inspired word of the Spirit."[169]

Therefore, according to the 1978 International Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, whose roughly 300 attendees drafted "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy", "Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teachings, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives."[170] G.L. Archer is more specific when he states that "We must therefore conclude that any event or fact related in Scripture - whether it pertains to doctrine, science, or history - is to be accepted by the Christian as totally reliable and trustworthy, no matter what modern scientists or philosophers may think of it."[171]

Such Evangelists are often called, "Fundamentalist" and hold that the Scriptures should be understood literally. O.B. Greene, for instance, argues: "Jesus dies a literal death. He was buried - not figuratively or spiritually, but literally, in a literal tomb. And He literally rose again - bodily, as He had declared He would and it had been prophesied."[172]

The literal reading of the Scriptures or in the words of Henry "the literal truth of an inerrant Bible " is often emphasized but not followed all the time. There is a common tendency to interpret the text in a way to fit a presupposed scheme, theology or eschatology leading sometimes to a " full-scale exegetical exploitation."[173]

Furthermore, the Scriptures should be accepted in totality, otherwise it would cast doubts to its authority and absolute truthfulness in the matters fundamental to the Christian faith. If Paul, argues Francis Schaeffer, " is wrong in this factual statement about Eve's coming from Adam [1 Cor. 11:8], there is no reason to have certainty in the authority of any New Testament factual statement, including the factual statement that Christ rose physically from the dead."[174] Therefore any criticism of its text or belief in limited or "virtual" inerrancy would be appalling in that it not only negates the Scripture's self-testimony, but because it appears to cast doubts about the pivotal doctrine of the Christian faith and the perfect knowledge and authority of Jesus. J.I. Packer observes that "Christ does not judge Scripture; He obeys it and fulfills it. By word and deed He endorses the authority of the whole of it. Certainly, He is the final authority for Christians; that is precisely why Christians are bound to acknowledge the authority of Scripture. Christ teaches them to do so."[175]

In short, the fundamentalists prove inerrancy and plenary inspiration by appealing to the character of its witnesses, "We believe this doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures primarily because it is the doctrine which Christ and his apostles believed, and which they have taught us." The church history and tradition is a witness as says Gaussens, "With the single exception of the Theodore of Mopsuestia...it has been found impossible to produce, in the long course of the first eight centuries of Christianity, a single doctor who has disowned the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, unless it be in the bosom of the most violent heresies that have tormented the Christian Church."[176] This point is supported by what J.N.D. Kelly observes: "It goes without saying that the fathers envisaged the whole of the Bible as inspired. It was not a collection of disparate segments, some of divine origin and others of merely human fabrication. Irenaeus, for example, is not surprised at its frequent obscurity, `seeing it is spiritual in its entirety'; while Gregory of Nyssa understands St. Paul to imply that everything contained in Scripture is the deliverance of the Holy Spirit. Even Theodore of Mopsuestia, who distinguished between the special inspiration of the

prophets and the inferior grace of 'prudence' granted to Solomon, was not really an exception, for he was satisfied that all the authors of both the Testaments wrote under the influence of one and the same Spirit. Origen, indeed, and Gregory of Nazianzus after him, could perceive the activity of wisdom in the most trifling verbal minutiae, even in the solecisms, of the sacred books." Kelly further observes that, "This attitude was fairly widespread, and although some of the fathers elaborated it more than others, their general view was that Scripture was not only exempt from error but contained nothing that was superfluous. 'There is not one jot or tittle', declared Origen, 'written in the Bible which does not accomplish its special work for those capable of using it.' In similar vein Jerome stated that 'in the divine Scriptures every word, syllable, accent and point is packed with meaning'; those who slighted the commonplace contents of *Philemon* were simply failing, through ignorance, to appreciate the power and wisdom they concealed. According to Chrysostom, even the chronological figures and the catalogues of names included in Scripture have their profound value; and he devoted two homilies to the salutations in *Romans 16* in the hope of convincing his auditors that treasures of wisdom lie hid in every word spoken by the Spirit."[177] Kelly concludes that with the exception of Augustine and Theodore " The majority were content to accept the fact of the inspiration of the sacred writers, without examining further the manner or the degree of its impact upon them."[178]

However such a claim may be anachronistic for according to Canon Charles Smyth "nobody really believed in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures until the geologists began to question it in the nineteenth century."[179] The Scriptures are not infallible and inerrant Word of God containing absolute truth about every thing in the world. They are records of God's revelation and good for Christian faith. Long before modern times St. Augustine commented " We do not read in the Gospel of the Lord's having said: I send you a Comforter to teach you about the course of the sun and moon. What he sought to produce was Christians, not astronomers."[180] Augustine further analyzed the prophetic vision into three principal categories i.e. corporal, spiritual and intellectual.[181] Writing about the scriptural depiction of the paradise of Eden St. Augustine observed: "a number of interpreters give a symbolic meaning to the whole of that paradise, in which dwelt the first parents of mankind, according to the truthful narrative of holy Scripture. They give a spiritual reference to those fruit-bearing trees, and the others, turning them into symbols of virtues and moral qualities. They take it for granted that those were not visible and material objects, but were thus described in speech or writing to stand for spiritual and moral truths."[182] Augustine approves this line of approach to the Scriptures by arguing that "This is the kind of thing that can be said by way of allegorical interpretation of paradise; and there may be other more valuable lines of interpretation. There is no prohibition against such exegesis, provided that we also believe in the truth of the story as a faithful record of historical fact."[183] The Christian history is replete with allegorical interpretations of the Scriptures as we have already seen in the previous chapter.

Modern Christian response to the Scriptures has taken so many forms that it cannot be surveyed here at this point. One of the most frequently discussed responses is that of Rudolf Bultmann.

To Bultmann the New Testament cosmology is "essentially mythical in character."[184] Its world view and the event of 'redemption' which is subject of its preaching is obsolete. A "blind acceptance of the New Testament mythology would be arbitrary, and to press for its acceptance

as an article of faith would be to reduce faith to works."[185] Modern man's knowledge and mastery of the world has advanced to such an extent that he is no more interested in this pre-scientific and mythical eschatology, "Man's knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology that it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world- in fact there is no one who does."[186] If the Christians want to save the truth and message of the New Testament "the only way is to demythologize it."[187] The New Testament itself invites such a revolutionary process, "the principal demand for the criticism of mythology comes from a curious contradiction which runs right through the New Testament."[188]

The demythologization of the Scriptures can be achieved only through "an existentialist interpretation" of the New Testament. Bultmann and his school have given a great deal of thought to hermeneutics and scriptural interpretation. They believe that the Christian Gospel is the proclamation of something God has done once for all in the early decades of our era. That kerygma, as Bultmann calls it, of the New Testament can be made fully intelligible and acceptable today once interpreted by appropriate hermeneutic techniques apart from mythology. This kerygma will offer "man an understanding of himself which will challenge him to a genuine existential decision."[189]

The scholars following the existential approach view the Scriptures as the unique place where the believer encounters the Word of God. To them only the Christ is the Word of God and the Scriptures are fallible, finite and human witness/response to Christ. The Scriptures become the Word of God only because God uses them to reveal Himself. The spoken word, says Brunner, "is an indirect revelation when it bears witness to the real revelation: Jesus Christ, the personal self-manifestation of God, Emmanuel."[190] Therefore, the "Scriptures- first of all the testimony of the Apostle to Christ- is the "crib wherein Christ lieth" (Luther). It is a "word" inspired by the Spirit of God ; yet at the same time it is a human massage; its "human character" means that it is colored by the frailty and imperfection of all that is human."[191] This question remains unanswered: how in the world is anyone going to know the true "Word of God" while the sole source of information about the Word i.e. the Scripture is imperfect and unauthentic. How could it be that the Holy Spirit or the Divine Providence preserved and guarded the text and truths of certain parts of the Scriptures and let the others be suffered and disfigured by imperfect human beings?

For Paul Tillich the Scripture is less revelation itself than record of revelation; revelation takes place in a dialectical encounter between God and man. The Scriptural text is the report of such an encounter. "The Bible is a document of the divine self-manifestation and of the way in which human beings have received it...The basic error of fundamentalism is that it overlooks the contribution of the receptive side in revelatory situation and consequently identifies one individual and conditioned form of receiving the divine with the divine itself."[192] The question remains still unanswered. What are the other forms and ways of receiving the divine and how authentic and objective are they? Would they not lead us to sheer subjectivity? What would be the methods and tools of verifying the authenticity and rationality of such forms or claims?

Liberal Christians seem to answer many of these questions by not believing in the literal doctrine of divine dictation of the Scriptures. For them the Scriptures are an outstanding expression of

man's hopes, aspirations and fears. The authors of these so called `sacred' books were mere human beings whose thought patterns were influenced and conditioned by their cultural limitations. Therefore, the liberals may disagree with the Biblical authors even in religious matter if they deem that modern time and understanding demands so.

D. Nineham, for instance, argues that as soon as "we look closely at individual New Testament writers and the way they articulate their feelings and their understanding of the new situation, the element of variety and strangeness become much more apparent, and it becomes clear that the variety derives from the fact that the writers have come from a variety of backgrounds, each with its own mythology and terminology, each dominated by its distinctive religious outlook, fears and aspirations."[193] They were not infallible stenographers putting into writing whatever God dictated to them or whatever the Spirit inspired them. They were "at best honest, but simple-minded and ill-educated, primitives",[194] who were trying to make some sense out of the unusual event of Christ. Their account of Christ's event is not the inerrant Word of God but it is " precisely history and story- history embedded in a context of interpretative story."[195] The "story" was not critically examined in the previous generations because, as says C.S. Lewis, the Middle Ages were "the ages of authority", and he goes on, "if their culture is regarded as a response to environment, then the element in that environment to which it responded more vigorously were manuscript. Every writer if he possibly can, bases himself on an earlier writer, follows an auctour: preferably a Latin one. This is one of the things that differentiates that period...from our modern civilization."[196]

To tell the same story is the "embarrassment of the modern scholar"[197] because it lacks "consistency appropriate to unified dogmatic theory."[198] Therefore, Dennis Nineham advises the Christians to approach the Scriptures "in an altogether more relaxed spirit, not anxiously asking ' what has it to say to me immediately?, but distancing it, allowing fully for its `pastness', accepting it without anxiety as an ancient story about God and the world, told by people who regarded the world as a phenomenon of at most some five thousand year's duration and believed in God's constant saving interventions in its affairs from creation day to Doomsday."[199] It is no more a `sacred' book and Christians should not feel guilty about it. Fr. William writes, that "The discarding of the old bottle and the provision of the new has been interpreted by some Christians as a denial that there is any wine at all. That is because they have imagined that God can be contained within the limits of a definition as though wireless waves were identical with a certain type of receiving set."[200] The question is worth being repeated again. If the wireless waves are not fully transmitted and authentically communicated through the receiving set, what else is there to authentically inform us and appropriately convey to us the nature and function of the waves and how could we benefit from such a source of communication? Discarding the old bottle is quite different from discarding the only bottle available.

In short, according to Nineham, "Liturgists, quite as much as dogmatic theologians, need to free themselves from what has rightly been called ' the curse of the canon'." [201]

Richard Swinburne's approach is quite interesting. He agrees with many, that we cannot take the Bible literally. He observes: "Of course if we are misguided enough to interpret the Bible in terms of the 'original meaning' of the text, that the original meaning is often false: there is scientific, historical, moral, and theological falsity in the Bible, if it is so interpreted. This evident fact led

many liberal-minded theologians of the twentieth century to cease to talk of the Bible being 'true', but to speak rather of it being 'useful' or 'insightful' if read in accord with some rule or other of interpretation; and there have evolved as many ways of interpreting as there have been theologians to do the interpreting. And saying this sort of things about the Bible hardly gives it special status-the same could be said of any great work of literature. A general fog settled over 'hermeneutics.'"[202] But he further argues: "And yet the rules are there, sanctified by centuries of use by those who claimed in accord with Christian tradition that the Bible was 'true'. If we wish to take seriously claims for truth of the Bible, we must understand it in the way that both philosophical rules for interpreting other texts, and so many of those who interpreted the Bible or laid down the rules for doing so in previous centuries, suggest; and that includes their admission that it contains deeper truths which future generations wiser than themselves might detect by using their rules."[203] Swinburne, I think, is quite aware of the limitations of these centuries-old rules of interpretations and can appreciate the problems involved in applying and following those rules without further elaborations and modifications.

Any modification less than a frank confession of the fact that the writers of these books were imperfect, primitive human beings trying to understand and interpret the multi-faceted Christ event to the best of their ability, probably, would not work in our times. It goes without saying that such a response and interpretation face the limitations of their writers and cannot be equated with or labeled as the inerrant Word of God Himself.

Christology And Anthropomorphism:

Jesus historically existed among Jews, respected their Scripture and claimed to be sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "To a considerable extent", writes Grant, "Jesus shared the views of his fellow Jews about the God who had revealed himself to Moses and to the prophets."[204] There may have been features distinctive to Jesus' understanding of God and His transcendence, but the concept as a whole would probably be not at odds with the Jewish understanding of the Deity. Earliest Christians, then, obviously inherited themes of divine transcendence and monotheism from the developed Judaism "and it was almost inevitable that they should have been discussed by early Christians when the nature of God was being considered."[205] Therefore the earliest Christians must have believed in the One, Holy, Just God of developed Judaism. Later history and claims of Christianity are living proofs of this fact as Kelly observes: "The doctrine of one God, the Father and creator, formed the background and indisputable premise of the Church's faith. Inherited from Judaism, it was her bluewark against pagan polytheism, Gnostic emanationism and Marcionite dualism."[206]

Like Clement, many of the church fathers argued that the Hebrew Bible's anthropomorphic expressions must be taken metaphorically. Basil interpreted turning "His face" as God leaving us alone in difficulties. Gregory of Nazianzus interpreted God's face as His oversight, Theodoret as His benevolence and restoration of freedom, and John of Damascus as his display and self-revelation through countless works.[207]

On the other hand, the New Testament contains very few anthropomorphic expressions like the finger of God (Luke 11:20), mouth of God (Matthew 4:4), sight of God (Luke 16:15), earth

being the footstool of God (Matt. 5:35) and almost all of them can be interpreted metaphorically. In spite of that, many church fathers' held a corporeal and anthropomorphic concept of the Deity. Bigg observes that "In the view of the *Homilies*, the Valentinians, Melito..., Tertullian *Adv. Praxeam* 7, God is corporeal. Even Irenaeus finds the image of God in the body of man... Anthropomorphism lingered on long in the East."[208] Two centuries after Clement, St. Augustine still wrestled with strong anthropomorphic and corporeal tendency among Christians as well as the Church itself. Christians, he observed, "think of God in a human form and suppose that he is such."[209]

This is in addition to the fact that the New Testament is not centered on Almighty God. It is Christocentric. Burridge has shown by manual analysis of the four Gospels that Almighty God/Father occupies a sum total of just 2.5% of the Gospels while the rest of the Gospels are concerned with Jesus in various capacities i.e. his person, teachings, his disciples, his recipients, his dialogue with Jewish leaders etc. (Mark gives only 0.2%, Matthew 0.6%, Luke 1.1% and John 0.6% place in his Gospel to the verbs whose subject is God/Father).[210] Charles Gore long ago has pinpointed this fact by observing that "Christianity is faith in a certain person Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him is meant such unreserved self-committal as is only possible, because faith in Jesus is understood to be faith in God, and union with Jesus union with God."[211]

There is, then, a tremendous concentration on one man, Jesus of Nazareth. He is described in different terms, concepts and ways. He is addressed as the Son of man, Son of God, the Word, the Prophet, the Messiah, the Kyrios or Lord and perhaps even as God. S. C. Guthrie Jr. observes that "All the doctrines of the Christian faith are related to Christ as spokes to the hub of a wheel. We could not talk who God is, how we know Him, what He is like and what He wants with us, without talking about the revelation of himself, His will and work in Christ...Everything else Christians believe stands or falls with what they believe about Jesus."[212]

Had there been no concentration on Jesus' person, or had the New Testament been systematic or uniform with regard to the nature of the above descriptions, there might perhaps have been no need for critical study or discussion of anthropomorphism in the New Testament. But as it is the New Testament writers are so obsessed with the Christ event that they seem to reflect upon every other thing, even God, through that mirror. Moreover, there is such a diversity of descriptions that it is extremely difficult to render Jesus into one uniform, universally agreed upon figure or concept. Therefore, the Christology, or the significance of Jesus and his relationship with God Almighty is the basic issue in our study of anthropomorphism in the New Testament. R. A. Norris Jr. rightly observes that the term "Christology" "does not signify just any sort of inquiry or reflection which has Jesus as its object. It refers quite specifically to inquiry and reflection that are concerned with Jesus *in his messianic character*. In other words, Christology asks what is presupposed and implied by the fact that Jesus is the elect "Son of God," the one through whose life, death, and resurrection God has acted to realize his purpose for humanity; and this fact imposes, from the beginning, a certain logic on Christology. To understand or evaluate Jesus christologically means, on the one hand, to ask about his relation to God and, on the other, to seek a way of expressing his representative character as a human being-his status as the one in whom humanity's common destiny is both summed up and determined."[213]

There are many Christologies in the New Testament. The fundamental issue in connection with the transcendence of God and anthropomorphism is the Christology of the person i.e. the doctrine of Christ's person and divinity. Modern scholarship is more widely divided on the issue of Christ's divinity and interpretations of the person of Jesus than Christians of the past generations. Almost all of the old christological issues and trends, often declared heresies by the Church, could virtually be traced in many modern scholars in one way or the other.

It has been customary with the Christians untill the late nineteenth century to believe in Jesus' divinity. The Church as well as the Christian population in general, as we will have the opportunity to see later in the chapter, had always contended that Jesus had proclaimed himself to be God the Son, second person of a divine Trinity, living among the human beings a complete human life like them except sin.

Still, in this modern age and time, there are scholars who argue that Jesus was divine and was conscious of his identity. R. E. Brown argues: "Jesus knew his own identity which involved a unique relationship to God that we call the divinity of the Son. Christians of later period were able to formulate Jesus' identity as "true God and true man," a formulation better than any other that had been attempted but certainly not exhaustive of the mystery....The idea that he was divine I find in most Gospel pages. An attempt to lessen the self-evaluation of Jesus to something like "he thought only that he was a prophet" would, in my judgment, involve proving the Gospels misunderstood Jesus. No Old Testament prophet acted in such independence of the Mosaic Law; and it is remarkable that one never finds in reference to Jesus a prophetic formula such as, "The word of God came to Jesus of Nazareth."...Jesus' intuitive knowledge of his self-identity would have been a knowledge of what we call in faith being God and being man, and certainly such self-knowledge can have been no less difficult to express than our knowledge of being human. I regard the term "God" applied to Jesus to be formulation of Christians in the second half of the first century seeking to express an identity that Jesus knew better than they and which is scarcely exhausted by the term "God"...It is not evident that Jesus formulated...his self-identity in the terms of later New Testament Christianity, such as...God. [Nonetheless] I have no difficulty with the thesis that if Jesus ... could have read John, he would have found that Gospel a suitable expression of his identity ... The affirmation that Jesus had knowledge of his self-identity ... is not meant to exclude a development in his existential knowledge of what that identity implied for his life."[214]

Ben Witherington, III fully agrees with Brown's thesis. He writes: "Material in the Synoptics hints that Jesus had a transcendent self-image amounting to more than a unique awareness of the Divine. If, however, one means by divine awareness something that suggests either that Jesus saw himself as the whole or exclusive representation of the Godhead or that he considered himself in a way that amounted to the rejection of the central tenet of Judaism, (i.e., monotheism), then the answer must be no. Jesus clearly prayed to a God he called *abba,* which excludes the idea that Jesus thought he was *abba.* Jesus' affirmation of monotheism seems clear (e.g., Mark 10:17-18; Matt. 23:9)."[215] He concludes affirming that "the seeds of later christological development are found in the relationships, deeds, and words of Jesus, and that in these three ways Jesus indirectly expressed some of his self-understanding. In short, he may have been mysterious and elusive at times, but this was because he intended to tease his listeners into thought and ultimately into a response of faith or trust."[216] F. Buechner has argued that Jesus had a face that was "not a front

for him to live his life behind but a frontier, the outermost visible edge of his life itself in all its richness and multiplicity .... So once again, for the last time or the first time, we face that face."[217] D. M. Baillie goes further than that. He argues that "Indeed it seems alien to the New Testament writers, in all the varieties of their Christology, not only to say that Jesus *became* divine, but even to say He was or is divine. That is not how they would have put it, because in the world of the New Testament, even though it is written in Greek, the word God is a proper name, and no one could be divine except God Himself. Therefore it is more congenial to Christian theology to say that Jesus is God (with the further refinements of meaning provided by the doctrine of the Trinity) than to speak of Him as divine; and certainly it will not say that He became divine."[218] R. C. Moberly argues that Christ "is not so much God and man as God in, and through, and as, man."[219] L. S. Thornton argues that "in Christ the human organism is taken up on to the "level" of deity."[220] Frank Weston has almost similar views regarding the divinity of Christ..[221]

There are other scholars who do believe that Jesus was divine, God the Son, but recognize the fact that Jesus did not explicitly proclaim his divinity. For instance Archbishop Michael Ramsey wrote that "Jesus did not claim deity for himself."[222] C.F.D. Moule observed that "Any case for a "high" Christology that depended on the authenticity of the alleged claims of Jesus about himself, especially in the Fourth Gospel, would indeed be precarious."[223] James Dunn and even staunch upholders of traditional christology like Brian Hebblethwaite and David Brown acknowledged the fact.[224] Hebblethwaite wrote that "it is no longer possible to defend the divinity of Jesus by reference to the claims of Jesus."[225] Brown recognized that it is "impossible to base any claim for Christ's divinity on his consciousness..."[226]

On the other hand, some of these scholars argue that Jesus was implicitly aware of his divine identity and he revealed the same to his disciples by means of his extraordinary actions like radical approach to the Mosaic law and forgiving of sins. C.F.D. Moule argues that "Jesus was, from the beginning, such a one as appropriately to be described in the ways in which, sooner or later, he did come to be described in the New Testament period- for instance as "Lord" and even, in some sense, as "God"."[227] The Catholic scholar Gerald O' Collins affirms "a self-consciousness and self-presence in which [Jesus] was intuitively aware of his divine identity."[228] James Dunn implies such an implicit awareness when he argues that "We cannot claim that Jesus believed himself to be the incarnate Son of God; but we can claim that the teaching to that effect as it came to expression in later first-century Christian thought was, in the light of the whole Christ-event, an appropriate reflection on and elaboration of Jesus' own sense of sonship and eschatological mission."[229]

Contrary to that, John Hick firmly rejects this line of approach. He argues that "If one has already accepted a form of orthodox christology one can reasonably interpret some of Jesus' words and actions, as presented by the Gospel writers, as implicitly supporting that belief. But it seems clear that one cannot justifiably arrive at the belief simply from the New Testament evidence as this has thus far been analyzed and interpreted by the scholarly community."[230]

There are other traditional scholars who use the concept of "Christ-event" to justify the proper divinity in spite of the fact that Jesus did not proclaim it for himself. This elusive concept of kerygma and the Christ-event seems to have appeared first in R. Bultmann's existential

interpretations of the New Testament myth[231] and has been widely utilized by scholars like John Knox. Knox argues that "The Church is the distinctive Christian reality...And it is because the Church is [Christ's] body and, in history, his only body, that we often use the words "Christ" and "Church" interchangeably, saying "in Christ" when we are wanting to refer to what it really means to be--and really to be--in Church. It is this embodiment or incarnation (that is, the Church) which is most immediately- indeed alone is immediately - known... And so I say again, the Incarnation originally took place, not within the limits of an individual's individual existence, but in the new communal reality, in principle co-extensive with mankind, of which he was the creative center."[232]

J.N.D. Kelly insists upon essential continuity between later trinitarian christological developments and the initial New Testament as well as Church's christology. He argues: "The Trinitarianism of the New Testament is rarely explicit; but the frequency with which the triadic schema recurs ... suggests that this pattern was implicit in Christian theology from the start. If these gaps are filled in, however, we are entitled to assume with some confidence that what we have before us, at any rate in rough outline, is the doctrinal deposit, or the pattern of sound words, which was expounded in the apostolic Church since its inauguration and which constituted its distinctive message."[233] He further argues: "Nevertheless the Trinitarian ground-plan obtrudes itself obstinately throughout, and its presence is all the more striking because more often than not there is nothing in the context to necessitate it. The impression inevitably conveyed is that the conception of the threefold manifestation of the Godhead was embedded deeply in Christian thinking from the start, and provided a ready-to hand mould in which the ideas of the apostolic writers took shape. If Trinitarian creeds are rare, the Trinitarian pattern which was to dominate all later creeds was already part and parcel of the Christian tradition of doctrine."[234] John Macquarrie finds the concept of the Christ-event and the continuity between that significant event and the response of the Church as very useful as it does, in view of Macquarrie, "relieve the problems that arise from our lack of information about the historical Jesus." He further argues that "We do not need to know the inner thoughts of Jesus, and in any case we cannot. When one places him in his context and acknowledges that he cannot be abstracted from his community and the responses of that community, to be gathered from the appellations it applied to him, then many of our questions, although they continue to have certain historical interest, are of no great moment for christology."[235]

It is strange enough to assume that the first generation of Christians were better equipped to understand Jesus than Jesus himself. Modern day fundamentalists seem to be claiming they are even better equipped than the first Christians to understand what Jesus must have been. Such interpretations substantiate the claims that Christianity consists in later responses to Jesus and not necessarily what Jesus preached about God or about his person. John Hick rightly observes that "this kind of thinking, in which Christianity is no longer centered upon the person of Jesus but now upon the church, has moved a long way from the traditional belief that Jesus, the historical individual, was himself God the Son incarnate."[236] He argues that the "'soft' divinity, expressed in the 'son of God' metaphor, eventually developed into the 'hard' metaphysical claim that Jesus was God the Son, second person of a divine Trinity, incarnate. But to use the 'Christ-event' concept to validate this development involves arbitrarily stretching that highly flexible 'event' at least as far as the Council of Nicaea (325 CE), and preferably to include the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)."[237] He further asks, "how is it possible for the church to know something so important about Jesus

that he did not know about himself.?"[238] After a good discussion of other trends like that of the Holy Spirit guiding the church to these theological developments,[239] or cosmic Christ or risen Lord,[240] Hick concludes that "none of these ways can relieve upholders of Jesus' deification of the task of justifying that momentous move. Such justification involves showing both that the process by which the deification came about is one that we can regard as valid, and that the resulting doctrine is in itself coherent and credible."[241]

Contrary to what has been observed about the traditional view, many liberal scholars do not accept the theme of the divinity of Jesus Christ in its above discussed strict sense. They believe that Jesus was not divine in the above discussed sense at all. He neither claimed nor was conscious of the divinity of his person. The Ritschlian historian of dogma, Harnack, roundly rejects notions of Christ's divinity in his classical statement: "The Gospel, as Jesus proclaimed it, has to do with the Father only and not with the Son. This is no paradox, nor, on the other hand, is it "rationalism," but the simple expression of the actual fact as the evangelists give it."[242] He further observes that "The Gospel is no theoretical system of doctrine or philosophy of the universe; it is doctrine only in so far as it claims the reality of God the Father."[243] To Harnack, Jesus "desired no other belief in his person and no other attachment to it than is contained in the keeping of his commandment. Even in the fourth Gospel, in which Jesus' person often seems to be raised above the contents of the Gospel, the idea is still clearly formulated: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To lay down any "doctrine" about his person and his dignity independently of the Gospel was, then, quite outside his sphere of ideas. In the second place, he described the Lord of heaven and earth as his God and his Father; as the Greater, and as Him who is alone good. He is certain that everything which he has and everything which he is to accomplish comes from this Father. He prays to Him; he subjects himself to His will; he struggles hard to find out what it is and to fulfill it. Aim, strength, understanding, the issue, and the hard *must,* all come from the Father. This is what the Gospels say, and it cannot be turned and twisted. This feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering individual is a man who in the face of his God also associates himself with other men."[244]

It had been customary to suggest, as we have seen earlier, that Jesus did not disclose his true identity and message to the disciples because of their limitations. For instance A. S. Peake wrote: " ... It was far better that Jesus should lead them through intimate familiarity with Him, through watching His actions and listening to His words to form their own judgment of Him, rather than by premature disclosure to force the truth upon them before they were ready for it, and when they would inevitably have misunderstood it."[245] To contend that Jesus intended his true message to be partially hidden or to be understood in the light of his death and resurrection, to Harnack, "is desperate supposition. No! his message is simpler than the churches would like to think it; simpler, but for that very reason sterner and endowed with a greater claim to universality. A man cannot evade it by the subterfuge of saying that as he can make nothing of this "Christology" the message is not for him. Jesus directed men's attention to great questions; he promised them God's grace and mercy; he required them to decide whether they would have God or Mammon, an eternal or an earthly life, the soul or the body, humility or self-righteousness, love or selfishness, the truth or a lie."[246] In short, Jesus " leads them to God, not only by what he says, but still more by what he is and does, and ultimately by what he suffers."[247] Jesus did not have any other creed than the simple creed of "do the will of God". "How great a departure from what he thought and

enjoined is involved in putting a Christological creed in the forefront of the Gospel, and in teaching that before a man can approach it he must learn to think rightly about Christ. This is putting the cart before the horse."[248]

Harnack argues that this radical departure from Jesus' Gospel took place during the process of the Hellenization of the Gospel. It took place when Christianity entered the Greek world, "the Gospel was detached from the mother soil of Judaism and placed upon the broad field of the Graeco-Roman Empire. The apostle Paul was the chief agent in accomplishing this work, and in thereby giving Christianity its place in the history of the world."[249] Though apostle Paul "not only worked harder but also accomplished more than all the rest put together," he perverted the Gospel of Jesus by giving new directions to it. "The formation of a correct theory of and about Christ threatens to assume the position of chief importance, and to pervert the majesty and simplicity of the Gospel. Here, again, the danger is of a kind such as cannot arise with Jesus' sayings. Even in John we read: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." But the way in which Paul defined the theory of religion, the danger can certainly arise and did arise. No long period elapsed before it was taught in the Church that the all-important thing is to know how the person of Jesus was constituted, what sort of physical nature he had, and so on. Paul himself is far removed from this position,- "Whoso calleth Christ Lord speaketh by the Holy Ghost," - but the way he ordered his religious conceptions, as the outcome of his speculative ideas, unmistakably exercised an influence in a wrong direction." Harnack concludes observing: "That, however great attraction which his way of ordering them may possess for the understanding, it is a perverse proceeding to make Christology the fundamental substance of the Gospel is shown by Christ's teaching, which is everywhere directed to the all-important point, and summarily confronts every man with his God."[250]

Likewise, John Hick contends that "it is extremely unlikely that Jesus thought of himself, or that his first disciples thought of him, as God incarnate."[251] At another place Hick writes: "it seems pretty clear that Jesus did not present himself as being God incarnate. He did not present himself as the second person of a divine trinity leading a human life. If in his lifetime he was called "son of God," as is entirely possible, it would be in the metaphorical sense that was familiar in the ancient world. In this sense, kings, emperors, pharaohs, wise men, and charismatic religious leaders were freely called sons of God, meaning that they were close to God, in the spirit of God, that they were servants and instruments of God. The ancient Hebrew kings were regularly enthroned as son of God in this metaphorical sense."[252] He further argues that "From our point of view today it would require earth-shaking miracles, overturning the whole established secular world-view, to cause a historical individual to be regarded as being also God."[253] He claims a kind of broad agreement among contemporary New Testament scholars that "the historical Jesus did not make the claim to deity that later Christian thought was to make for him: he did not understand himself to be God, or God the Son, incarnate. Divine incarnation, in the sense in which Christian theology has used the idea, requires that an eternally pre-existent element of Godhead, God the Son or the divine Logos, became incarnate as a human being. But it is *extremely* unlikely that the historical Jesus thought of himself in any such way. Indeed he would probably have rejected the idea as blasphemous; one of the sayings attributed to his , 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone' (Mark 10. 18)"[254]

Hick also views the impact of the Graeco-Roman world upon the Christian thought as the point of departure from the true teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. He argues that Jesus was "fulfilling the unique role of the final prophet, come to proclaim a New Age, the divine kingdom that God was shortly to inaugurate on earth...to endure in the pluralistic world of the Roman empire and eventually to become its dominant structure of meaning: Jesus the eschatological prophet was transformed within Christian thought into God the Son come down from heaven to live a human life and save us by his atoning death."[255]

The fundamental role played by Paul in giving altogether new directions to Jesus' message has been emphasized by Wellhausen and other liberal scholars of that era. The core of the influential "Tubingen hypothesis" was that Christianity owes far more to Paul than to Jesus. F. C. Baur, the founder of the "Tubingen School", argued that "The history of the development of Christianity dates of course from the departure of Jesus from the world. But in Paul this history has a new beginning; from this point we are able to trace it not only in its external features, but also in its inner connection."[256] He observed that "from the time of his conversion the apostle Paul went his own independent way, and avoided intentionally and on principle all contact with the older apostles."[257] Therefore it was the apostle Paul, concluded Baur, "in whom Gentile Christianity found in the course of these same movements, of which the proto-martyr Stephen is the center, its true herald, and logical founder and expositor."[258]

This influenced the famous nihilist scholar Nietzsche to observe first in his "The Dawn of Day" that "the ship of Christianity threw overboard no inconsiderable part of its Jewish ballast, that it was able to sail into the waters of the heathen and actually did do so: this is due to the history of one single man, this apostle who was so greatly troubled in mind and so worthy of pity, but who was also very disagreeable to himself and to others."[259] Then in his "Antichrist" he claimed that Paul was the great falsifier, disevangelist, forger out of hatred, the very opposite of a bringer of glad tidings: " Paul is the incarnation of a type which is the reverse of that of the Saviour; he is the genius in hatred, in the standpoint of hatred, and in the relentless logic of hatred. And alas what did this dysevangelist not sacrifice to his hatred! Above all the Saviour himself: he nailed him to *his cross*. Christ's life, his example, his doctrine and death, the sense and the right of the gospel-not a vestige of all this was left, once this forger, prompted by his hatred, had understood it only that which could serve his purpose."[260] He claimed that "The very word "Christianity" is a misunderstanding,- truth to tell, there never was more than one Christian, and he *died* on the Cross. The "gospel" *died* on the Cross. That which thenceforward was called "gospel" was the reverse of that "gospel" that Christ had lived: it was "evil tiding," a *dysevangel*."[261]

G. Bernard Shaw argued that "Paul succeeded in stealing the image of Christ crucified for the figure-head of his Salvationist vessel, with its Adam posing as the natural man, its doctrine of original sin, and its damnation avoidable only by faith in the sacrifice of the cross. In fact, no sooner had Jesus knocked over the dragon of superstition than Paul boldly set it on legs again in the name of Jesus."[262] He concluded that, "Now it is evident that two religions having such contrary effects on mankind should not be confused as they are under a common name. There is not one word of Pauline Christianity in the characteristic utterances of Jesus."[263] In fact "There has really never been a more monstrous imposition perpetrated than the imposition of the limitations of Paul's soul upon the soul of Jesus."[264] De Lagard, the champion of a "German religion" and

"national church" traced the ironic development of Christianity back to the fact that " a man with no call whatsoever [Paul] attained to influence in the church."[265] Rosenberg's remarks in his "Myth of the Twentieth Century" would be painful to recall here.

This negative attitude towards the apostle Paul is nothing new. The third century anonymous treatises like "A False Proselyte" or "Messenger of Satan" or "Persecutor of Faith"[266] are enough to show the sense of negativity harbored by some Jewish-Christian opponents of Paul. G. Bornkamm has shown that "even in his own lifetime his opponents considered him as apostle without legitimation and a perverter of the Christian Gospel. In the subsequent history of the early church, too, there were two very different judgments. For a considerable period he continued to be sternly rejected by Jewish Christians as antagonistic to Peter and James the brother of the Lord; in these circles people did not even stop short of ranking him with Simon Magus, the chief of heretics (Pseudo-Clementine). It is true that from the end of the first century onward there are a few ecclesiastical writers who hold him in high esteem and quote from his letters (1 Clement, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp). Apart from these, however, very soon it was the Gnostics and leaders of sects, in particular Marcion, who claimed him as theirs, thereby making him suspect in the eyes of the church. Accordingly, for decades we hear absolutely nothing about him or else, as in the spurious 2 Peter (written in the middle of the second century), he is mentioned as "dear brother," but with reserve because, since his letters were hard to understand, "ignorant and unstable people have twisted" his teaching " to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:15f). Even when, as in Acts, he was hailed as a great missionary or, as in the Pastorals, an attempt was made to preserve his teaching, and when in other parts of early Christian literature voices were raised in his honor, the lines along which theology evolved were different from his. Then, unequivocally and finally, the great church wrested his theology from the heretics and requisitioned it as its own- but in a tamed and modified form."[267]

Since the last century, polemics against the apostle have been observed in writings of many critical Protestant researchers. "Admittedly, the results of critical Protestant research were largely negative. Above all, it revealed the gulf between Jesus and Paul and ended by saying that Christianity was founded not by the Jesus of history who, in spite of all his uniqueness, is to be understood in the light of Judaism, but by Paul, who turned it into a religion of redemption, the influence on him being Jewish modes of thought, but also, and specially, Oriental pagan views and myths, as these have spread mainly in Hellenistic mystery religions."[268] The elements of truth in these kinds of remarks need corrections. But it is pertinent to mention before we discuss the corrections and later developments in connection with Paul that these conclusions led many scholars to the oft-repeated slogan "Back to the historical Jesus" or "Jesus, not Paul".[269]

It was Wilhelm Heitmuller who gave a new dimension to the debate over Paul's contributions towards hellenization of Christianity. Heitmuller argued that "The Christianity which Paul joins and from which he is to be understood, is not really the primitive church in the strict sense, i.e., the Christianity of the earliest Jesus-group on Jewish soil in Jerusalem and Judea, to which the immediate disciples and friends of Jesus belonged. It is rather a *form already further developed*: if one can use an expression and rightly understand it, a *Hellenistic Christianity*."[270] He further observed that "The development series reads: Jesus-primitive church-Hellenistic Christianity-Paul. And even if the *genesis* of Pauline Christianity were to be thought of as quite independent of this

Hellenistic form of primitive Christianity, it would still remain certain that the piety and theology of the missionary Paul who encounters us in the letters...the only Paul we know-could only be understood in light of his constant contact with Hellenistic Christianity of a congregation like Antioch, which first supported his mission and which was in part Gentile Christian."[271] However, it needs to be substantiated by authentic historic facts how all these radical changes took place within such a short span of time i.e. before the conversion of Paul and what were the factors that made such a swift change possible?

After the Second World War the slogan "Jesus, not Paul" virtually became a slogan in the debates between Christians and Jews as Meeks observes: "it had lasting influence on the conversation between Jews and Christians. It now became possible for sophisticated Jews in pluralistic environments to claim Jesus as their own, while laying at Paul's doorstep the alienation between classical Judaism and orthodox Christianity."[272] Martin Buber's "Two Types of Faith",[273] Leo Baeck's "Romantic Religion"[274] and H.J. Schoeps' "Paul, The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History"[275] are examples of this trend. These scholars represent to an extent a consensus that has been growing in this century. The consensus, in Meek's words, is that "Paul has to be understood as a Jew and a Hellenist, and both his Jewishness and his Hellenism were transformed by his Christianity."[276]

With the rise of the academic discipline of "the history of religions" or "comparative religion" emphasis was laid upon the religious experience of Paul instead of his theology. Certain parallels were observed between the language of Paul and that of the mystery cults and also between the sacramental practices in his churches and the rituals of the mysteries.[277] Adolf Deissmann's illustration of caches of papyrus documents contemporary with the earliest Christianity showed that Paul was not that much of a theologian as much a representative of popular piety.[278] Diessmann observed that "What happened at Damascus ought not to be isolated, but it should be regarded as the basal mystical experience of the religious genius to whom also in later life extraordinary and even ecstatic experiences were vouchsafed. All that can be called Paul's Christ-mysticism is the reaction to this initial experience."[279] Equally important was the discovery or recovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Christian and Jewish *apocalypses,* a number of books advocating the end of the present world and giving a mythological description of the messianic age or the kingdom of God at hand. Albert Schweitzer seized upon this framework of apocalyptic ideology to interpret Paul. He argued that "Instead of the untenable notion that Paul had combined eschatological and Hellenistic ways of thinking we must now consider either a purely eschatological or a purely Hellenistic explanation of his teaching. I take the former alternative throughout. It assumes the complete agreement of the teaching of Paul with that of Jesus. The Hellenization of Christianity does not come in with Paul, but only after him."[280] In this way Schweitzer broke with the tradition of Reitzenstein, Bousset, Baur, Harnack and others who gave either Hellenistic or Jewish-Hellenistic interpretations to Paul. He argued that "the conviction that through the death and resurrection of Jesus the proximate coming of the Messianic Kingdom with Jesus as its ruler was assured. It was this elementary teaching which formed the burden of the discourse when he journeyed as a missionary from place to place. To it he constantly recurs in his Letters. With this therefore, the exposition of Paulinism must logically begin." [281]

It was R. Bultmann's view of Paul which dominated the discipline in the 1950s and 1960s. Bultmann argued that "The mythology of the New Testament is in essence that of Jewish apocalyptic and the Gnostic redemption myths. A common feature of them both is their basic dualism, according to which the present world and its human inhabitants are under the control of demoniac, satanic powers, and stand in need of redemption."[282] Man alone cannot achieve redemption. "At the very point where man can do nothing, God steps in and acts-indeed he has acted already-on man's behalf."[283] That is what Paul's mysticism has emphasized.[284] "The Pauline catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit ("love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, temperance", Gal. 5. 22) shows how faith, by detaching man from the world, makes him capable of fellowship in community. Now that he is delivered from anxiety and from the frustration which comes from clinging to the tangible realities of the visible world, man is free to enjoy fellowship with others."[285]

J.K. Riches observes that Bultmann's view of Paul was attractive and its "powerful attraction stemmed from his combination of detailed philological studies of Paul's language and thought with a searching theological analysis. While his interpretation was deeply Lutheran in inspiration (albeit a Luther understood as a prophet of radical human freedom), it was also worked out in dialogue with significant contemporary attempts to make sense of human existence. Paul emerges not as the purveyor of arcane, pre-scientific myths, but as the father of a rich tradition of spirituality, including among its representatives Augustine (353-430), Luther, Pascal (1623-1662) and Kierkegaard, which charts and illumines the inwardness of men's and women's existence under God."[286] Bultmann tried to give a Pauline reading of John to show that both were the apostles of a Christian inwardness (spirituality) that was effected by the kerygma or preaching of Christ, the Word. Though E. Kasemann, E. P. Sanders and others have differed with him over a number of issues their appraisals of Paul are quite favorable like those of Bultmann.[287] It may be observed that even mystical rather than theological Paul was either misleading by himself or misunderstood by the later generations so as to be a herald of such a change of emphasis that replaced God with the person of Jesus the Christ. The role of Paul is still significant and can be argued as one of the determining factors of the radical change mentioned above.

There is another significant development with regard to Pauline studies in modern times. Presently, a good number of New Testament scholars seem to disagree with the nineteenth century portrayal of Paul and do not see the sharp distinction and wide gap between Jesus' teachings and those of Paul, the characteristic of nineteenth century liberal interpretation of Paul. Scholars like J. G. Machen argue that "Paul was not regarded as an innovator with respect to Jesus by Jesus' intimate friends. He was not regarded as an innovator even with regard to those elements in his message-such as freedom from the Law-about which no definite guidance was to be found in the teaching or example of Jesus. Still less was he regarded as an innovator in his account of Jesus' person."[288] He further argues that if the Gospels are "trustworthy, then it will probably be admitted that Paul was a true disciple of Jesus. For the Gospels, taken as a whole, present a Jesus like in essential to that divine Lord who was sum and substance of the life of Paul."[289] We have already discussed the difficulties involved in taking the Gospels as the trustworthy and historically authentic documents about Jesus and riddle of silence in Paul of the historical settings peculiar to the Gospel material. The issue of the Gospels portraying Jesus as divine Lord in the traditional sense is again a debatable issue as seen already. Therefore this

appraisal of Paul can be disputed or approved. It is a matter of one's taste and standpoint about the Gospels and understanding of Paul's theology. This depends mainly upon how one takes the Gospel materials and how one interprets them and that is not an easy task.

On the other hand, the movement of the "Rediscovery of the Historical Jesus" gathered great momentum for quite a while but landed in a jungle of diverse interpretations and portraits of Jesus. The remarks of Professor R. H. Lightfoot, the representative of the British Form Criticism, are a classical reflection of the outcome. "It seems, then, that the form of the earthly no less of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us....And perhaps the more we ponder the matter, the more clearly we shall understand the reason for it, and therefore shall not wish it otherwise. For probably we are as little prepared for the one as for the other."[290] The reason, to quote Edwyn Bevan, may be that "As a figure calculated to inspire men to heroic acts of self-sacrifice, it may be doubted whether the figure of Jesus, if detached from what Christians have believed about Him, is adequate. There are sayings which bid men give up everything for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, but His own life, unless what Christians have believed is true, does not offer any single example of self-sacrifice....There is the Cross. Yes, but apart from the belief of the Church, it must be exceedingly doubtful whether Jesus incurred the suffering of the Cross voluntarily, with prevision of the destiny to which His action was leading."[291] There is no independent source leading us to details concerning the Jesus of history except the New Testament itself and the New Testament is a result of Kerygma and not of history. It may not be inappropriate to quote Karl Barth here to whom "it is impossible from the study of the Gospels (which were never meant for such a purpose) to discover what Jesus was like as a human personality; and because, even if we could discover it, the result would be disappointing to those who expected to find a revelation there, since only a `divine incognito', a veiling of God, was present in the human life of Jesus."[292]

In short, writes A. Grillmeier, S.J., "The attempt came to nothing. Thereupon there followed a return to the theological treatment of the New Testament statements about Christ. Martin Kahler stood at the beginning of the new movement; he brought to German Protestant theology the recognition, `that the Christian faith is related to Jesus of Nazareth as he was preached in the apostolic proclamation as the crucified and the risen one. The message of the apostles is the proclamation of a *kerygma* for which they have been commissioned by the appearances of the risen one....The reminiscences of the Jesus of history were preserved, shaped and interpreted within the framework of the proclamation of the risen one and this interpretation is the right and legitimate one for the Christian faith.' The pendulum has now swung in the opposite direction: whereas the slogan used to be 'the pure Jesus of history', it is now 'the pure Christ of faith.' To this effect, Bultmann pursues Kahler's views to their conclusion."[293]

We have already seen in this chapter how Bultmann uses the "Christ myth" of the New Testament for a Christian self-understanding by means of "existential interpretation". The result is that "the problem of the 'Jesus of history' is bracketed off from 'theology', and the latter is made dependent on itself."[294] In the words of E. Kasemann: "the earthly, crucified Jesus was to be seen only in the light of Easter day. But it was also realized that the event of Easter cannot be adequately comprehended if it is looked at apart from earthly Jesus."[295] It follows without saying that for the early church "the life of Jesus was constitutive for faith, because the earthly and the exalted Lord are identical."[296] This position is quite paradoxical and in a sense contradictory. The difficulties

involved are still the same: Is Christianity in its traditional garb, the religion manifestly preached by Jesus himself or what the later Christians thought about him? In either way the question of authenticity and logical proof would by and large still be there. However, in spite of its limitations, this has been the position adopted by a majority of English theologians as H. Conzelmann observes: "They thus reserve for themselves the possibility of drawing a continuous line from Jesus' understanding of himself to the faith of the community. Easter is no way ignored, but the content of the Easter faith, and with it the basic christological terms and titles, is traced back to Jesus' own teaching. The theology of the community appears as the working out of the legacy of the Risen Christ on the basis of his appearance...."[297]

A. M. Ramsey summarizes the Anglican position in the following words: "Modern Anglican theology owes many of its characteristics to the central place held within it by the Incarnation. Anglicanism has, for instance, dwelt much on the Nicene and Chalcedonian dogmas and on those ancient Fathers who directly interpreted them. Always somewhat insular in its attitude to continental theology, Anglicanism in these years paid little heed to continental movements and writers, except when they concerned the Person of Christ, in history or dogma: as did the writings of Harnack, Ritschl and Schweitzer. Furthermore, the doctrine of the Incarnate Christ as the Logos gave a constant impulse towards relating the Incarnation, wherever possible, with contemporary movements in thought or social progress."[298] It is true as we have seen already in Kelly, Moule and Stanton. It will suffice here to quote A. M. Ramsey himself who observed that "The theology of the Apostles sprang ... not from their own theorizing, but from certain historical events which led them to beliefs far removed from their own preconceived notions. The most significant of the events was the Resurrection."[299] Therefore, to Ramsey, "The Resurrection is the true starting-place for the study of the making and meaning of the New Testament .... Jesus Christ had, it is true, taught and done great things: but He did not allow the disciples to rest in these things. He led them on to paradox, perplexity and darkness; and there he left them.... But His Resurrection threw its own light backwards upon the death and the ministry that went before; it illuminated the paradoxes and disclosed the unity of His words and deeds. As Scott Holland said: " In the resurrection it was not only the Lord who was raised from the dead. His life on earth rose with Him; it was lifted up into its real light."[300] He concludes that "It is desperate procedure to try and build a Christian Gospel upon the words of Jesus in Galilee apart from the climax of Calvary, Easter and Pentecost. If we do so we are professing to know Jesus better than the first disciples knew Him; and the Marcan record shews us how complete was their perplexity before the Resurrection gave them the key.... early oral tradition about Jesus was handed down, every written record of Him was made only by those who already acknowledged Him as Lord, risen from the dead."[301] The question of explaining how the disciples would know Jesus better than Jesus himself remains unanswered.

With this swinging of the pendulum in the other direction, views about Paul are also modified to a significant extent as we have discussed earlier. Even a contemporary German scholar like Hans Kung could argue that "only blindness to what Jesus himself willed, lived and suffered to the very roots or to what Paul urged with elemental force, in Jewish-hellenistic terminology, moved-like Jesus- by the prospect of the imminent end of all things: only blindness to all this can conceal the fact that the call "Back to Jesus" runs right through the Pauline letters and frustrates all attempts to turn the message into Jewish or Hellenistic ideology."[302] Paul, according to Kung, spiritualized

the Jesus Christ. "It is not a question of another Jesus Christ but of a fundamentally changed relationship with him."[303]

Even amidst these changed circumstances and views we can see the old central theme of liberal theology echoing itself in many modern scholars. K. Armstrong wrote: "There has been much speculation about the exact nature of Jesus' mission. Very few of his actual words seem to have been recorded in the Gospels, and much of their material has been affected by later developments in the churches that were founded by St. Paul after his death."[304] Paul, the Jew, could have never called Jesus God. "It was a subjective and mystical experience that made him describe Jesus as a sort of atmosphere in which "we live and move and have our being". Jesus had become the source of Paul's religious experience: he was, therefore, talking about him in ways that some of his contemporaries might have talked about a god."[305] She is sure that "Paul never called Jesus "God". He called him "the Son of God" in its Jewish sense: he certainly did not believe that Jesus had been the incarnation of God Himself: he had simply possessed God's "powers" and "Spirit," which manifested God's activity on earth and were not to be identified with the inaccessible divine essence. Not surprisingly, in the Gentile world the new Christians did not always retain the sense of these subtle distinctions, so that eventually a man who had stressed his weak, mortal humanity was believed to have been divine."[306]Armstrong further argues, that "After his [Jesus] death, his followers decided that Jesus had been divine. This did not happen immediately... the doctrine that Jesus had been God in human form was not finalized until the fourth century. The development of Christian belief in the Incarnation was a gradual, complex process. Jesus himself certainly never claimed to be God."[307]

R. A. Norris gives a somewhat similar account of the situation. "It may well be the case that the earliest Christology simply proclaimed Jesus as the human being who had been marked out by the resurrection as the coming Messiah, that is, as the one through whom God would finally set things right. In such a Christology, the title "Son of God" would have referred not to any quality of divinity but to the fact that Jesus was called and set apart for a certain function in God's purposes. In fact, however, this way of understanding Jesus was generally supplanted as Christianity spread among Greek-speaking peoples in the Mediterranean world."[308] It was Paul, writes Norris, who directed the significant developments in the portrayal of Jesus that "The Christ is a heavenly figure who was "in the form of God" and who enters the world as a human being in order to bring salvation."[309]

Therefore, it is safe to argue that discussions about Paul, his mysticism, and theology, and also about the role of the first Christians and evangelists in determining the direction of the Christianity, all these discussions have taken several turns in the past century. But the fundamental questions regarding the historical Jesus' role in the outcome, about the significance of Paul and the Church's role, and relationship of later christological developments with the original message of Jesus, all these questions are still by and large unanswered. Whenever the efforts have been made to answer these questions, the suggested answers have not been to the satisfaction of a great majority of scholars in the field. Therefore, no body can deny the difficulties, doubts, and uncertainties involved in the issue. The modern research has offorded us a better understanding and appreciation of the difficulties involved but, by no means answered all the questions with certainty.

In addition, there are numerous developments in modern thought concerning Christology and Jesus' divinity which, to Albert C. Knudson, "make inevitable a revision of the traditional Christology. They call for a more historical, a more empirical, a more anthropocentric, a more ethical, a more personalistic approach to the problem. This is evident from the history of Christological thought during the past century."[310] Knudson summarizes the specific changes in the main three areas: "First, complete humanity must be attributed to Jesus, not only in the sense that he had a human spirit as well as a human soul and body, but in the sense that his personal center, his ego, was human. This does not exclude his divinity, but it does mean the relinquishment of traditional theory that the human nature of Jesus was impersonal and that the ego or personal center of his being was constituted by the eternal Logos."[311] It can be seen even in conservative theologians such as D. M. Baillie and careful ones like Mackintosh. The fifth century Cyril of Alexandria's familiar phrase, "the impersonal humanity of Christ" looks like 'Docetism' to Baillie and he recognizes that "few theologians now would defend the phrase or would hesitate to speak of Jesus as a man, a human person."[312] H. R. Mackintosh wrote: "If we are not to trust our intuitive perception that the Christ we read of in the Gospels is an individual man, it is hard to say what perception could be trusted."[313] R. C. Moberly wrote: "Human nature which is not personal is not human nature."[314]

Furthermore, observes Knudson, "In the second place, the uniqueness of Jesus is to be regarded as due, not to the union of two "natures" within him, one human and the other divine, but to his unique dependence upon the divine will and to his unique enduement with the Divine Spirit. Thirdly, divinity is to be ascribed to Jesus, not because he made this claim for himself, nor because he was possessed of omniscience and omnipotence, but because of his unique consciousness of oneness with God and because of his creative and redemptive agency in the founding of the kingdom of God."[315] How different is this approach from traditional claims that Charles Gore represented, arguing that "If we wish to account for the unique position which Jesus Christ has held in religion it is only necessary to examine the claim which he is represented to have made for Himself in the earliest records which we possess."[316] And we believed in Jesus divinity because he claimed so.

With these significant changes, especially "with the new emphasis on the humanity of Jesus limitations came to be placed on his divine nature."[317] The divinity of Jesus, according to many modern scholars, is grounded "in the divine will rather than the divine nature" and in many modern works is "thought of as manifesting itself in a heightened human consciousness rather than in a type of experience alien to that of normal humanity."[318] His divinity in other words " was not his own theory about himself nor was explicit in own self-consciousness. It was rather the church's conception of what he was or should be to his followers and to the world. Looking back upon what he was and upon his moral and spiritual significance in the history of the world the church has confidently affirmed with Paul that God was in him. This is the Church's interpretation of his unique personality."[319]

Moreover, the ancient Greek and Christian understanding of the term" *persona*" or "personality"[320] have undergone significant changes in modern times. Karl Barth, for instance, disagrees with Boethius' (sixth century) classical definition that continued to be influential in the

Middle Ages: *"naturae rationabilis individua substantia"* which really means an individual rational being. Quoting Aquinas' consciousness of the difficulties involved in the definition, Barth goes on to show how the modern concept of personality adds the attributes of *"self-consciousness"*. The traditional doctrine of trinity (three Persons) or the Social Trinity would then be tantamount to tritheism as it would mean three distinct individuals and centers of consciousness, three self-conscious personal beings. Therefore Barth suggests to drop the term "three Persons" as he argues: "The ancient concept of Person, which is the only one in question here, had to-day become obsolete....Wherever ancient dogmatics, or Catholic dogmatics even to-day, speaks of "Person", we prefer to call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in God the three individual modes of existence of the one God, consisting in their mutual relationship."[321] "It is to the one single essence of God, which is not to be tripled by the doctrine of the Trinity, but emphatically to be recognized in its unity, that there also belongs what we call to-day the "personality" of God."[322]

On the other hand Clement C. J. Webb does not see any radical change in the usage of the term "person" in the modern times. "The general history of the word Person with its derivatives in philosophical terminology may be said to have moved throughout on lines determined for it by the process whose result is summed up in the Boethian definition of *persona*."[323] He argues that the orthodox Church spoke of personality in God rather than the personality of God. It conceived of God as comprising of a unity of three personalities and not as one personality. "It might seem then as though Divine Personality might be conceived as analogous to the Personality of a nation or state."[324] This is different from Barth's view and close to the Cappadocian father's analogy of three distinctive individual men alongside each other. This "ultra Cappadocian" movement, as Baillie names it, in modern Trinitarian thought has been influential in Anglican circles. Leonard Hodgson's "*The Doctrine of the Trinity*",[325] F. D. Maurice are good examples of this influence.[326] Karl Rahner prefers "Sabellian Modalism" to what he calls the "vulgar tritheism" of Social Trinities.[327]

The central theme of this school is the "social" interpretation of the Trinity and phrases such as "the social life of the Blessed Trinity" are frequently observed in the writers of this school. The main contrast between Barthian interpretations and this school, in the words of Baillie, is that Barth "prefers to speak of one Person in three modes of being: the other school prefers to speak quite frankly of three Persons in the highest kind of personal and social unity."[328] This "internal constitutive unity", as Hodgson says, or the unity in glory, as Moltmann argues, allows the possibility of three separate persons, i.e. centers of consciousness but unites them in love.

The fact of the matter is that like ancient Christian Fathers, as we shall shortly see, none of these schools and conservative theological approaches seem to solve the central problem from where we started i.e. the relationship of Jesus Christ's person with the transcendent, indivisible, impassable, unique, eternal and One God . These may be good guessworks but are definitely not satisfactory solutions. The difficulty is that the traditional Christianity has almost always insisted upon the person of Christ as divine, Second Person of the Trinity, equal in all respects with God and claimed at the same time his humanity equal in almost all respects except sin with humanity. Such a position is not paradoxical. It is contradictory in itself. It is difficult to prove such a claim so fundamental to Christianity in terms intelligible to modern man. Many modern Christian

scholars and theologians seem not ready to deny or denounce the traditional claims and are at a loss to prove that to modern man. Therefore, they keep on moving in circles, making claims without logically substantiating them and in the course repeating, in many cases, opinions either discussed in early centuries or discarded as heretical. In neither case the charges of anthropomorphism can be denied.

To understand the difficulties involved we need to study the New Testament itself and how its themes were developed by the Fathers.

Christology and the New Testament:

The central question "What think ye of Christ?" has been answered in a number of different ways by New Testament writers. He is a Prophet, "And King Herod heard of him...and he said , That John the Baptist was risen from the dead... Others said, That it is E-li'-as. And others said, that it is the prophet, or one of the prophets." (Mark 6:14-15) Matthew clearly names Jesus as the prophet, "And when he was to come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, who is this? And the multitude said, this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." (Matt. 20: 10-11 see also Acts 3:22; 7:37).[329] In view of passages like these Henry D. A. Major argues that "Jesus was an absolute Jew in His religion and felt Himself called upon, in the spirit of one of the eighth-century prophets (an Amos or a Hosea), to reform that religion. As a consequence He made fierce attacks upon contemporary Judaism and its leaders, and, like other of the goodly fellowship of the Prophets of Israel who had preceded Him, He suffered their fate, but at the hands of the Roman Procurator of Judaea."[330] It was only after his death, contends Major, that some of his enthusiastic followers "became convinced that Jesus, the prophet of Galilee, was more than a prophet, and proclaimed their conviction that He was the Messiah, God's Anointed One, the Son of God."[331] Shirley Jackson Case argues that Jesus was a prophet of God: " The prophet lived in a relation to God that was essentially a mystical experience. But it was not the type of mysticism that evaporated in an orgy of emotions. There was a wealth of feeling in the prophetic experience, but it was of the sort that gave to life a mighty ethical and spiritual drive. Jesus did not lose himself in God, as though the emotions were an end in itself. On the contrary, the divine seizure was for the sake of increasing righteousness in the world and contributing to human welfare. Its end was to be the establishment of the Kingdom."[332] He further argues that "The process of idealization rapidly gathered momentum. Time dimmed historical memories as death removed those who had known Jesus in the flesh."[333] So Jesus who was originally a prophet was raised and exalted to God's right hand. Jeremias, refusing to accept that Jesus was a "Rabbi of Nazareth" nevertheless writes: "Jesus then was regarded as a *charismatic* rather than a professional theologian (Mark 1.22 par.). The unanimous verdict on him was that he was a prophet. There was a constant echo to this effect among the people (Mark 6.15par.; 8.28 par.; Matt. 21.11, 46; Luke 7.16; John 4.19; 6.14; 7.40, 52; 9.17) and even-though coupled with skepticism-in Pharisaic circles (Luke 7.39; Mark 8.11 par.). According to Luke 24.19, Jesus' disciples, too, saw him as a prophet. Finally, it was as a false prophet that Jesus was arrested and accused. This is clear from the account of the mockery under Jewish confinement."[334] He further argues that "The tradition in which Jesus appears a prophet and bearer of the spirit must be old one, as it cannot be traced back to the early church. Where possible, the earliest church avoided `prophet' as a christological title, because it felt it to be inadequate."[335]

Geza Vermes argues that it was "not merely because of any dogmatic inadequacy, that the title ceased altogether to be applied to Jesus". One of the reasons, to Vermes, was that "from the middle of the first century AD to the end of the first revolt these self-proclaimed wonder-workers found a ready following among the simple victims of the revolutionary activities of the Zealots. But as the promises remained unfulfilled and the miracles failed to materialized, and as the sarcasm and antipathy of their political opponents stripped the pretenders of their repute, the term `prophet' applied to an individual between the years AD 50 and 70 not surprisingly acquired distinctly pejorative overtones in the bourgeois and aristocratic idiom of Pharisse and Sadducees."[336] Vermes quotes many New Testament verses like Mark 6:15, 8:28, 14:65, Matthew 16:14, 21:11, 21:46, 26:68, Luke 7:39, 9:8, 9:19, 13:33, 24:19 etc. to conclude that "No expert would deny that Gospels portray Jesus as wearing the mantle of a prophet".[337] He further argues that according to many sayings reported in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus "not only thought of himself as a prophet, but also described to his prophetic destiny every unpleasantness that was to happen to him."[338] To him "the belief professed by his contemporaries that Jesus was a charismatic prophet rings so authentic, especially in the light of Honi-Hanina cycle of traditions, that the correct historical question is not whether such an undogmatic Galilean concept was in vogue, but rather how, and under what influence, it was ever given an eschatological twist."[339]

The emphasis on the prophetical nature of Jesus' mission has been laid upon more and more in recent works especially by the scholars who study and locate Jesus against his Jewish background. M. Hengel,[340] G. Theissen,[341] G. Vermes,[342] Bruce Chilton,[343] E. P. Sanders and John Hick are just a few examples. E. P. Sanders, for instance, contends that certain unassailable facts about Jesus' life and mission locate him firmly within Jewish restoration eschatology. The fact that he was baptized by John the Baptist, was a Galilean preacher and healer who confined his activity to Israel and engaged in controversy about the temple, called twelve disciples, and aroused substantial opposition among the Jewish people, all of these facts place him in the context of Jewish hopes for the restoration of the nation of Israel. Therefore, Sanders concludes that "Jesus saw himself as God's last messenger before the establishment of the kingdom."[344] John Hick writes: "We can say that Jesus lived in the first third of the first century and that he was a Jew-Indeed, his Jewishness is becoming more and more fully recognized. He was evidently a charismatic preacher and healer."[345] He also contends that "Jesus' intense God-consciousness was of course inevitably structured in terms of the religious ideas of his own culture. The basic concept with which to understand his own existence in relation to God was that of prophet."[346]

On the other hand, many Christian scholars have disagreed with the above sketched description of Jesus as merely a prophet like other Jewish prophets. Charles Gore, a conservative Bishop who edited *Lux Mundi* in 1890, argued that " to represent our Lord only as a good man conscious of a message from God, like one of the Prophets or John the Baptist, is to do violence not to one Gospel only or to single passages in various Gospels, but to the general tenour of the Gospels as a whole."[347] Others like H. Conzelmann,[348] O. Cullmann,[349] F. Hahn[350] and R. H. Fuller[351] have discussed about the advantages and disadvantages of this title and seem to agree about its inadequacy, while V. Taylor has qualified it as christologically "abortive". [352]

In conclusion, it is pertinent to quote Grillmeier who rightly observes that "The designation of Jesus as `prophet' was only short-lived; it had a reference to Deut. 18.15, 18 and served to explain Jesus' mission to Jewish audiences (Acts 3.22; 7.37; John 6.14; 7.40). And even if the Fathers are right later in emphasizing that the transcendence of Christ is something more than a heightened prophetical office, this title nevertheless embraces his mission as revealer of the Father and teacher of men."[353]

Angel Christology:

As early as the Synoptic Gospels Christ is depicted as an angelic prince. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mk.8:38; also Matt. 13:41f; Mk. 13:26ff; 1:13; Luke 22:43; 1 Thess. 4:16). Grillmeier observes: "One of the attempts of the primitive Christian period to express the transcendence of Christ is the so-called `angel-christology' or the designation *Christos angelos*. It is so significant that attempts have been made to prove that it was the original christology, at least in Jewish-Christian circles. Jesus, it is held, was understood as an angel in the strict sense i.e. as a heavenly creature sent by God into the world. With the condemnation of Arianism this legitimate and original conception was stamped as heresy. It had to give place to the strict doctrine of two natures."[354]

M. Werner argues that the oft-quoted title Son of Man would be best interpreted if we assume "that this Messiah belonged to the (highest) celestial realm of the angels. This view is expressly confirmed by the sources."[355] He further argues that Paul's usage of the title *Kyrios* does not negate the fact. In Late Judaism and primitive Christianity the angels were invoked as *Kyrios*. Werner observes that " The history of the Primitive Christian doctrine of Christ as a high angelic being pursued its way in the post-apostolic period through successive stages. At first the very view gradually subsided of its own accord and became problematical. Then, already profoundly shaken within, it had to endure finally a decisive assault during the Arian dispute of the fourth century. In this conflict it was bitterly attacked by the representatives of the new doctrine of Christ, which had emerged in the interval, and at last it was proscribed and suppressed as erroneous doctrine."[356] Grillmeier observes that "We may point out the over-estimation of the *Christo angelos* idea, but within limits it is not to be denied as a historical fact. The sources testify that Christ was given the name `angel' right up until the fourth century."[357]

Messianic Christology:

Long before Jesus' advent Jews had been expecting the Messiah.[358] Jesus was given this title. He is the Christ, the Messiah "And he saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him." (Mark 8:29-30) In Matthew 16:16-18 Jesus is told to have approved the title: "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jo-na: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In a reply to the chief priest and the scribes Luke

(22:67-69) reports Jesus to have said: "Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe: And if I also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."[359] It is only in Mark 14:61-62 that Jesus is reported by the evangelist to have confessed being the Christ. " Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see The Son of Man SITTING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

B. Harvie Branscomb argues that "As an exact historical record it is of very doubtful dependableness.... even Professor Burkitt, who championed so persuasively the historicity of Mark, admitted that " the grounds against treating Mark xiv 53-65 with the same measure of historical respect that one accords to the rest of Mark xiv. are sound." One is faced, therefore, with a baffling set of facts: in spite of the conviction of the early Church that Jesus was the expected Messiah, the Synoptic Gospels record only one dubious instance in which Jesus affirmed this..."[360]

The New Testament scholars differ whether Jesus used the title "Christ or Messiah" or it was put into his mouth.[361] Many scholars, observes Branscomb, "conclude that " Jesus made no claim to special or unique dignity, and that the title, "the Messiah," or the "Anointed One," is also to be attributed to the early Church. Jesus, it is maintained, only thought of Himself as a prophet. After the belief in the resurrection was established, His followers acclaimed Him as the Messiah or Christ, and this was read back into earlier history. In this way the "Messianic secret" of Mark is explained: there was nothing of this Messiahship in the familiar story of tradition; hence it was assumed that Jesus had imposed on the disciples a decree of silence."[362] W. Wrede's famous work ***"Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien"***[363] is a classical example of this approach. Although the "Messianic Secret" motif of Mark theory has been questioned by a number of scholars,[364] the ultimate results and conclusions drawn from that motif are still being followed by many liberal scholars. Frances Young , for instance, argues that "we do not have the evidence available now to speculate realistically about Jesus" so-called Messianic consciousness. (If we were to try and read between the lines we might even speculate that Jesus regarded personal claims as a Satanic temptation.) Of course it remains true that the church's christological preaching must have some continuity with, and basis in, the mission of Jesus, but its content need not to be, and probably was not, identical."[365] Bultmann contends that Jesus did not think of himself as the Messiah.[366] Bornkamm argues that "Jesus' history was originally a non-Messianic history, which was portrayed in the light of the Messianic faith of the Church only after Easter."[367] He further argues that "we must not allow ourselves to be misled by the fact that the Gospels themselves contain many passages which are clearly Messianic. These should be regarded first of all as the Credo of the believers, and as the theology of the early Church."[368] R. Augstein examines the implications of this position in the following words: "The Gospels, all four of them, leave no doubt in their teaching that Jesus knew himself to be the Messiah and , sooner or later actually said so. What truth can there be in them, if they regard Jesus as the Messiah when he himself does not..."[369]

Ben Witherington, on the other hand, argues that "Close scrutiny shows no unified messianic secret motif in Mark."[370] Hoskyns and Davey observe that "The Christology lies behind the aphorisms, not ahead of them; this means that at no point is the literary or historical critic able to

detect in any stratum of the synoptic materiel that a Christological interpretation has been imposed upon an un-Christological history."[371] P. Stuhlmacher argues, that "The so-called Messianic secret is not simply ... a post-Easter theological construction, and in general it had nothing to do with the attempt after easter to hide the fact that Jesus' life had proceeded unmessianically and beginning at easter had first been put in the light of Messianism. It is a question much more of a characteristic of the work of Jesus himself."[372] Witherington concludes that " Jesus saw himself as the Messiah - the *Jewish mashiach*."[373]

Branscomb, after a good discussion of the difficulties involved, concludes: "In view of these facts it seems reasonable in itself, and in accordance with the evidence, to assume that Jesus, believing Himself divinely commissioned to proclaim the nearness of the Realm of God and also its true character, opposed in this work by virtually all the accepted leaders of the day, threatened with death, yet striving to create a repentant and righteous nation ready for the imminent judgment, should have felt that He was "the anointed one" whom God had sent for this task."[374] He further argues that "This seems on the whole the most satisfactory solution. The records have been so overlaid with later beliefs that proof and absolute certainty are out of question. But without the assumption that Jesus accepted His disciples' expression of faith in Himself as "the Anointed One," the story of His last days and of the rise of the Christian movement becomes a series of unrelated and almost incomprehensible facts."[375]

The Son of Man Christology:

Jesus' most favorite and frequently used title, as the evangelists report, is the Son of Man. The great significance, says Oscar Cullmann, "of this designation is shown by the fact that according to the Gospels it is the only title Jesus applied to himself."[376] "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. 16:27) "Jesus said unto them, the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." (Matt.17:22-23) There are so many passages in the Gospels (69 times in the first three Gospels only) in which Jesus refers to himself as the Son of man that there is no need to enumerate them here.

The New Testament scholars differ over the origin, meanings and significance of this title.[377] An overwhelming majority of biblical scholars look for its origins and significance in the Jewish apocalyptic literature. H. E. Todt's "The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition" is a typical example of this approach. The heading of the first chapter of this book reads: "The transcendent sovereignty of the Son of Man in Jewish apocalyptic literature." 1 Enoch 37-71 (the Similitudes), Daniel 7, and 4 Ezra 13 are the frequently quoted passages in this connection.

The scholars also differ whether Jesus used the title for himself or it was put into his mouth by the church. P. Vielhauer, for instance, argues that the term "the Son of man" was originally used as a title to Jesus by the early Palestinian communities. It signified a supernatural, apocalyptic figure. It was not Jesus but the early Christians who used this term to designate Jesus. If "Jesus used it himself at all, it was only... with reference to a figure other than himself"[378] Bultmann and Bornkamm argue that Jesus did speak of the "Son of man or *bar enasha*" but his usage of the term was different from its later usages. Actually he was referring to someone other than

himself.[379] Reference has been made above all to Luke 12.8 "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God". Bornkamm argues that "although the historical Jesus spoke most definitely of the coming Son of man and judge of the world in the sense of the contemporary apocalyptic hope, and did so with the amazing certainty that the decisions made here with regard to his person and message would be confirmed at the last judgment, nevertheless he did not give himself the title Son of man. Also we can hardly assume that the earthly Jesus saw himself as destined to be the heavenly judge of the world."[380] Jeremias, on the other hand, argues that " when Jesus speaks in the third person he makes a distinction not between two different figures, but between his present and the future state of exaltation."[381]

Wilhelm Bousset observed: "In all our considerations we have no wish to deny the possibility that an individual Son of Man saying could have come from the lips of Jesus. But one cannot escape the impression that in the majority of these sayings we have before us the product of the theology of the early Church. That is the sure starting point for our work."[382] Todt quotes Matt.12:32 and Luke 12:10 to show the developing theology of the early church.[383] R. H. Fuller calls attention to a fundamental change of emphasis in christological outlook which has taken place between the stage of development represented by Acts 3:20-21 and Acts2:36. He observes: "Third, why? The answer must surely be, the delay of the parousia, and the increasing experience of the Spirit's working in the church."[384] Fuller further observes that "Jesus had declared that his own eschatological word and deed would be vindicated by the Son of Man at the end. Now his word and deed has received preliminary yet uncertain vindication by the act of God in the resurrection. The earliest church expressed this newborn conviction by identifying Jesus with the Son of man who was to come."[385] Norman Perrin goes further by observing that "Jesus had not referred to the Son of Man at all; all the Son of Man sayings stemmed from the early church."[386] He concludes, that "every single Son of Man saying is a product of the theologizing of the early church."[387] J. Hick observes that "There was the image of the son of man of Danielic prophecy, who was to come again in clouds of glory, and there was the image of the Messiah. However, it does not seem very probable that Jesus applied either of these images, or any other titles, to himself; rather, other people came to apply them to him."[388] Branscomb observes: "I conclude, therefore, that the series of ideas which viewed Jesus as the Son of Man to come in glory on the clouds of heaven, with the holy angels, was the theological achievement of the Palestinian Church." He further observes that "it never appears in the Gospels in the mouths of the disciples, probably for the following reason: It was known that this view of Jesus was not entertained by the disciples during Jesus' lifetime. In the tradition this fact took the form of the oft-repeated thought that the disciples did not understand until later what Jesus was endeavoring to teach them."[389]

Acceptance of this approach has significant implications upon our understanding of Christology as Perrin observes: "The acceptance of the fact that synoptic sayings have a history in the tradition makes a great deal of difference to the study of Christology, especially in connection with the beginnings of Christology, because it raises serious questions with regard to sayings which hitherto have been held to tell us something about Jesus' understanding of himself and in this way to mark the beginning of Christology."[390] He further argues that "What is true of the Son of man Christology is certainly going to be true of the other christological patterns, those using Son of God, Son of David, Christ, Lord, and so on, for none of these has anything like the secure place in

earliest Christianity that the Son of Man has."[391] R. Augstein asks that "If Jesus was neither the Messiah nor the son of man nor the son of God, and if he did not even think he was any of those, what is left? ...what good could his death do?"[392]

Professor J. W. Bowker of the University of Lancaster, on the other hand, emphasizes that Jesus used this term as an alternative for the first pronoun "I" or "me" or to denote himself as a frail mortal.[393] K. Armstrong observes that " the original Aramaic phrase (*bar nasha*) simply stressed the weakness and mortality of the human condition. If this is so, Jesus seems to have gone out of his way to emphasize that he was a frail human being who would one day suffer and die."[394] J. D. Crossan argues that "if Jesus spoke about a son of man, his audience would not have taken the expression in either a titular or a circumlocutionary sense but, following normal and expected usage, in either a generic (everyone) or an indefinite (anyone) sense. He is talking, they would presume, about human beings, making claims or statements about humanity. An unchauvinistic English translation would be "the human one".[395]

Many New Testament scholars argue that Jesus used this term for himself in light of the well known Danielic Son of man and apocalyptic literature. C. F. D. Moule, for instance, says that the title Son of man " seems to have come through virtually unmodified from Jesus himself."[396] He further states that "there is a strong case (or it seems to me) for the view that the phrase belonged originally among Jesus' own words as a reference to the vindicated human figure of Dan. 7 and as a symbol for the ultimate vindication of obedience to God's design."[397] Jeremias observes, that "It would be an error of method to suggest without further ado that these remaining Son of man sayings may be regarded as authentic, lock, stock and berrel."[398] But he concludes, that "the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings which we have recognized as the earliest stratum must in essentials go back to Jesus himself."[399] Ben Witherington claims a sort of consensus among scholars over this issue observing that "One of the most complex problems in the New Testament studies is how to understand the one label almost all scholars agree Jesus used of himself-the Son of man.[400] de Jonge makes almost the same claims.[401]

Scholars also differ over the true meanings of Daniel 7. Their views could be summarized in three man categories. (1) The figure mentioned in the Danielic vision refers to one or more angels. J. J. Collins persuasively argues this view.[402] (2) It stands for Israel, or at least for faithful Israel, for those who endure persecution. To Casey it is a symbol of Israel's triumphant.[403] (3) *Bar enash* does not represent Israel as much as it represents an individual figure who would represent Israel in the presence of Almighty God. This is the sense conveyed in the Similitude as well as in Daniel 7. B. Lindars argues that the "figure of the Similitude, variously termed, as we have seen, the Righteous One, the Chosen One, or "that Son of man," is a leader of the righteous and chosen ones, i.e., the faithful Jews. Consequently he must be seen as a representative figure, embodying the expectation of the Jews that their righteousness before God will be vindicated, their enemies will be liquidated, and they will reign with God....It would be a mistake to suggest that he is in some way a corporate figure, i.e., identical with the faithful Jews. But he represents their aspirations and expectations, and so is the head of them as a group...."[404] What is true of the Similitudes is true of Daniel 7.

Hence, many scholars conclude that Jesus used the term "the Son of man" for himself in conformity with the messianic figure envisioned in Dan. 7:13-14. B. Witherington observes that "The proper matrix in which to interpret the Son of man material, that which provides the clues as to how Jesus himself viewed the material, is Dan. 7:13-14 and probably also the *Similitude of Enoch.* The evidence seems sufficient to conclude that because Jesus *bar enasha* implies a certain form of messianic self-understanding on his part, although it does not take the form of the popular Davidic expectation. Indeed, Mark 14:62 suggests that Jesus corrected such an interpretation of himself by referring to the Danielic Son of man. Only when he comes upon the clouds will he assume the role of world judge and, indeed, judge of the people of God."[405] C. K. Barret believes that "the title Son of Man...does more than any other to cement the unity of the Gospel tradition. We have seen that in the background of this expression both suffering and glory play their part."[406] de Jonge concludes: "There seems to be no reason to deny that Jesus himself did claim a particular authority, there and then and in the future; thought of himself in terms of suffering and vindication; and expressed this in the term "the Son of Man" -covertly referring to the destiny of the "one like a son of man" in Daniel."[407] Even those scholars who do not believe that the title originated with Jesus himself do agree with the thesis that its usage in the Gospels was meant to convey the above mentioned Danielic sense. N. Perrin, for instance writes: " the evangelist Mark is a major figure in the creative use of Son of Man traditions in the New Testament period. To him we owe the general picture we have from the Gospels that "Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite self-designation and that Jesus used it to teach his disciples to understand both the true nature of his messiahship as including suffering and glory, and the true nature of Christian discipleship as the way to glory through suffering."[408]

Our prime-interest in the title lies in the fact that in classical Christian theology, as will be discussed later, the Son of Man has often been contrasted with the other significant title the Son of God to designate a dogma "true God- true Man" which on its part is very crucial for our study of anthropomorphism. For the time being it may suffice to quote Morton S. Enslin who observes that "The term "Son of man," whether Jesus did or did not employ it for himself, indicated a supernatural figure of cosmic importance, an angel far removed from common clay, and quite apart from "flesh and blood." Thus for preachers to persist in using the term as an antithesis to "Son of God": "He was both `Son of God' and `Son of man'," is unqualifiedly wrong and misleading. The term did not connote participation in the common lot of men, either by humble birth or amazing condescension. It was a unique and- to adopt a modern phrase-an "altogether other" figure. There were many "sons of God"; there was, could be, but *one* "Son of man.""[409]

The Son of God Christology:

The Gospel of Mark starts with this highly significant title, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Mk. 1:1) There are few passages in the Gospels where this title is put in the mouth of Jesus himself. Mostly it is either the Spirit of God (Mt. 3:16-17, MK. 1:11) or a voice from the clouds (Mt.17:5, LK.9:35) or unclean spirits (Mk.1:23-24, 3:11, 5:7) or high priest (Mt. 26:63) or the Centurion (MK.15:39) who address him with this title. It is Matthew 16:15-17 where Jesus reportedly seems to have approved this title, "He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jo-na: for flesh and blood

hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven." In John 10:36 Jesus is reported to have used the title for himself when he said to the Jews," Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"[410]

On the other hand Jesus is reported to have used the title "My Father" more frequently. For instance Mt. 11:27 reads, "All things are delivered unto me of my father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (see also MK. 13:32). In MT. 26 he prays two times with the words "O my Father" (Mt. 26:39-42) and in MK.14:36 he addresses God with the most intimate word "Abba".[411]

The use of the phrase "son of God" was current in Greek as well as Jewish traditions though with a wide range of implications and was applied both to human and superhuman beings.[412] Grant observes that "We are so accustomed to the traditional language of the Christian Church that we think it is perfectly natural to find Jesus called "Son of God" and "Son of Man" in the early Christian books, and to have these titles explained as referring to his divine nature (Son of God) and his human nature (Son of Man). These titles are not as simple as they look. In the Jewish literature of the first century, the title "Son of God" is actually used of human beings. A fragment from the Dead Sea Scrolls speaks of the Messiah, a man chosen by God, as "Son of God"; and in the apocalyptic book of Enoch there is a supernatural, heavenly figure who is called "Son of Man."[413] He further observes that "This example should warn us against thinking that we can have some kind of "instant understanding" of what the titles assigned to Jesus by the early church really meant. They are more strange and complicated than we assume they are."[414]

J. Hick writes even if Jesus was called "son of God" in his lifetime "it would be in the metaphorical sense that was familiar in the ancient world. In this sense, kings, emperors, pharaohs, wise men, and charismatic religious leaders were very freely called sons of God, meaning that they were close to God, in the spirit of God, that they were servants and instruments of God. The ancient Hebrew kings were regularly enthroned as sons of God in this metaphorical sense."[415] It is true that in Exodus 4:22 Israel is mentioned as the son of God, "Israel is my Son, My first born." In Psalms 2:7 David says that "The Lord had said unto me, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." In 1 Chronicles 22:10 Solomon is told to be the Son of God. Even in the New Testament the title is used for human beings other than Jesus. Luke 3:38 ends the genealogy of Jesus by writing " ...son of Adam, which was the son of God." Matthew 5:44 declares those who love their enemies and 5:9 declares the peacemakers as the children of God. Moreover Jesus is told to have used the phrases like "My Father", "Your Father" and "Our Father" frequently.

Now, in the historical person of Jesus, these variety of implications were woven together to create a mysterious and awe inspiring figure. It is true to observe with A. D. Nock that "the impact of the figure of Jesus crystallized elements which were already there."[416] But there is a distinctive element in Jesus' use of the term "Abba" as writes Michael Goulder, "Although there are a number of examples in Jewish literature of rabbis and other holy men being spoken of as God's sons, there is no serious parallel for the use of Abba in address to God, the term being normal for a human child to his father."[417] Hans Kung observes that "Hitherto only one explanation has been found:

abba- like our "Daddy"- is originally a child's word, used however in Jesus' time also as a form address to their father by grown-up sons and daughters and as an expression of politeness generally to older persons deserving of respect. But to use this not particularly manly expression of tenderness, drawn from the child's vocabulary, this commonplace term of politeness, to use this as a form of addressing God, must have struck Jesus' contemporaries as irreverent and offensively familiar, very much as if we were to address God today as "Dad."[418] Jeremias argues that "All this confronts us with a fact of fundamental importance. *We do not have a single example* of God being addressed as *'Abba* in Judaism, but Jesus *always* addressed God in this way in his prayers. The only exception is the cry from the cross (Mark 15:34 par. Matt. 27.46), and the reason for that is its character as a quotation."[419] Vermes, though, does find an example.[420]

The use of the title "the Son of God" for Jesus by others and Jesus' own use of intimate terms like my Father and Abba, to Cullmann, makes the "Father-Son relationship between God and Christ a special and quite unique one", and "does point to Christ's coming from the Father and his deity."[421] Jeremias, on the other hand warns that "the fact that the address 'Abba expresses a consciousness of sonship should not mislead us into ascribing to Jesus himself in detail the `Son of God' Christology, e.g. the idea of pre-existence, which developed very early in the primitive church. This over-interpretation of the address 'Abba is prohibited by the everyday sound of the word."[422] Grillmeier observes that the term Abba denotes that the "relationship of the `Son of God' to the `Father' is therefore not just a more or less technical circumlocution for a special election of Jesus, say, to be Messianic king: it means a real relationship of Son to Father....As revealer, the Son is mediator between God and a number of elect, but he is this precisely by virtue of his uniquely intimate relationship to the Father, which is more than that of a prophet, a king, or a faithful servant: the Son of God really is the beloved Son, to whom the father can give all things."[423] He further observes that the "Son of God" is a title "which, while affording a special insight into the primitive church's understanding of Jesus (cf. Mark 1.1,11;9.7;14.61; Luke 1.35;22.70; Matt.2.15;14.33;16.16;27.40,43), nevertheless has its basis in the unique consciousness of divine Sonship in Jesus himself. The consciousness (Mark 12.6;13.32; 14.6), together with Jesus' claim to be the only saving way to the Father (Matt. 11.25-27), is the decisive starting point not only for the confessions of primitive Christianity and the early church, but also for the christology which developed from them and led up to Chalcedon."[424]

The deity of Jesus may be more emphatically asserted in the Gospel of John.[425] This declares Jesus to be the Pre-existent Word, Lamb of God, the only begotten Son of God. (John 1:1-18)[426] Martin Luther commenting on the beginning verses of the Gospel of John observed that " From the very beginning the evangelist teaches and documents most convincingly the sublime article of our holy Christian faith according to which we believe and confess one true, almighty, and eternal God. But he states expressly the three distinct Persons dwell in that same single divine essence, namely God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father begets the Son from eternity, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, etc. Therefore there are three distinct Persons, equal in glory and majesty; yet there is only one divine essence."[427] He further illustrates the birth of the Son of God: "As a human son derives his flesh, blood, and being from his father, so the Son of God, born of the Father, received his divine essence and nature from the Father from eternity. But this illustration, as well as any other, is far from adequate; it fails to portray fully the impartation of the divine majesty. The Father bestows His entire divine nature on the

Son. But human father cannot impart his entire nature to his son; he can give only a part of it. This is where the analogy breaks down."[428] According to Calvin the reason was that the Son was to be the mediator and "it was of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator be both true God and true man."[429] He further argues that " The sole purpose of Christ's incarnation was our redemption."[430] The Gospel of John makes this point very clear: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). According to the Gospel of John, the Son of God is God in his self-revelation.[431]

Hebrews 1:1-10 makes it even clearer that to use the title "the Son of God" is to equate Jesus with God or to point to his deity and absolute participation in God. It means to say that he is "one with God".[432] R. A. Norris rightly observes that "This is the Christology which quickly came to dominate Christian thought about Jesus. It surfaces in its definitive New Testament form in John's Gospel, where Jesus is understood as the creative Logos or "Word" of God who "became flesh" to make "grace and truth" manifest (see John 1:1-14). It appears also in Hebrews, where the Son of God is described as the one through whom God "created the world" and who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature (Heb. 1:2-3). In the last resort, the New Testament cannot make sense of Jesus except by seeing his human life as the historical concentration of the very power through which God originally expressed himself in the creation of the world. Only in this way, it seemed, could one account for the truly universal significance of his life, death, and resurrection, or the truly ultimate and definitive character of the salvation which he brought. What is true of the writings of the New Testament is true also of other early Christian literature."[433]

Jesus' deification became more imminent in the minds of early Christians as they heard witnesses of his resurrection. The risen Lord revealed to them the knowledge which could have not been revealed by " flesh and blood " (Mt.16:17) and they felt obliged to proclaim it to every one that Jesus was the only Son of God. "Jesus is the 'Son of God' is therefore certainly one of the most ancient cradle statements of the early Church."[434]

Kyrios Christology:

Paul's favorite title is Kyrios meaning `Lord' (for instance Romans 1:3, 7, ; 5:1,11; 10:9; 16:24; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 3, 7, 8, 9,10).[435] "The central christological ideas of Paul", observes Grillmeier, "are the notion of pre-existence (though this is more presupposed than explicitly taught) and the worship of Christ as *Kyrios*. Both, however, were already at hand for him to use. He simply deepened the ideas and adapted them for preaching in the Hellenistic communities, at the same time composing them into a universal vision of history of salvation"[436] The title 'Kyrios' had been common among Jews as well as Greek circles to denote the reverence, the lordship, the mastership, the ownership and the authority.[437] The New Testament's use of the word is unique in the sense that it contains more than just lordship or exaltation. In the later New Testament books it clearly takes a definite form and absolute use meaning "the Lord",."for he is Lord of lords and King of kings." (Rev. 17:14).

In the Synoptic Gospels the title is used for Jesus as well as by Jesus for himself but without any absolute tone. Passages like Mark 11:3, Matt. 7:21 (even John 13:13) can be interpreted as meaning "teacher" or "master". The Rabbi, Master or Lord Jesus and the title 'Kyrios' received its full or absolute meanings in Pauline christology and after Jesus' death, resurrection and exaltation. " But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. 8:6) "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36, see also Acts 2:13-14) The pre-existent Word who was with God before the creation is now exalted to the right hand of God " to be a Prince and Saviour..." (Acts 5:31, see also Acts 7:55-56) The designation Kyrios or Lord, argues Cullmann, "expresses as does no other thought that Christ is exalted to God's right hand, glorified and now intercedes for men before the Father. In designating Jesus as the Kyrios the first Christians declared that he is not only a part of divine Heilsgeschichte in the past, nor just the object of future hope, but a living reality in the present- so alive that he can enter into fellowship with us now, so alive that the believer prays to him, and the Church appeals to him in worship, to bring their prayers before God the Father and make them effective."[438]

Jesus being a living reality, an object of worship and his cosmic lordship is the aspect which gives this title such a vitality and significance that is not equally present in other titles discussed earlier. This makes it the center and base of other Christological developments as is stated by Cullmann, "If we are to understand the origin and development of New Testament Christology, we must center our attention on the Kyrios title, just as the first Christians themselves placed it at the center of their confessions and from that center attempted to understand the other functions of Christ in the total Christ-event."[439] The early Christians worshipped him saying "Come Lord Jesus" (Rev.22:20) and could attribute to him all passages and hence works and attributes which the Old Testament attributes to God the Father, " One consequence of the application of the Kyrios title to Jesus is that the New Testament can in principle apply to him all the Old Testament passages which speak of God."[440] For instance, Isa. 45:23 is quoted by Paul in Phil. 2:10 in the following words," That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the glory of God the Father." Commenting on that C.F.D. Moule says, "At least, it represents Paul himself, or, at earliest, a pre-Pauline formula; and it boldly transfers to Jesus a great monotheistic passage from Isa. 45:23, in which God is represented as declaring that he must have no rivals: it is now to *Kurios lesous Christos* that every knee shall bow, and it is he whom every tongue shall confess. Professor M. Black is inclined to think that the same passage is intended in the name of the Lord Jesus even in Rom. 14:11. Certainly in Heb. 1:10ff. (though this may, of course, be later), a great, monotheistic passage in Ps. 102, manifestly intended in the original to be addressed to God the Creator, is boldly assumed to be addressed to Christ."[441]

Maurice Wiles observes that "It is the regular translation of the divine name in the Old Testament, and Phil. ii. 5-11 (another possibly liturgical passage) suggests that to call Jesus `Lord' is to give him that divine name whose glory Yahweh had declared should not be shared with an other. Thus it was a title given to him in worship and continually used of him in that context which helped to give expression to some of the highest Christological affirmations in the whole of the New Testament."[442] Hans Kung observes: "This is a Christocentrism working-out to the advantage of

man, based on and culminating in a theocentrism: "God through Jesus Christ"-"through Jesus Christ to God." As the Holy Spirit came to be inserted in such binitarian formulas-as the one in whom God and Jesus Christ are present and active both in the individual and the community-they were turned by Paul at this early stage into trinitarian formulas, the basis for the later development of the doctrine of the Trinity, of the triune God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit."[443]

Commenting upon Phil. 2:5-11, O. C. Quick argues that "St. Paul here affirms that Christ was originally that is, before he was born on earth, "in the form of God"....The Christ therefore was from the beginning a divine person."[444] He further argues that "we may interpret his meaning thus: whereas before his self-humiliation Christ had the *nature* of Godhead, in the exaltation which followed the humiliation he received also the *name* of Godhead, so that all may worship him as they worship the Father. That St. Paul did definitely, if one may be allowed the expression, rank Jesus with God, is abundantly clear from evidences which extends all through his epistles."[445] K. Armstrong, on the other hand, argues that "The hymn seems to reflect a belief among the first Christians that Jesus had enjoyed some kind of prior existence "with God" before becoming a man in the act of "self-emptying" (*kenosis)* by which, like a *bodhisattva*, he had decided to share the suffering of the human condition. Paul was too Jewish to accept the idea of Christ existing as a second divine being beside YHWH from all eternity. The hymn shows that after his exaltation he is still distinct from and inferior to God, who raises him and confers the title *Kyrios* upon him. He cannot assume it himself but is given this title only "to the glory of God the Father."[446] Armstrong further argues that "Paul never called Jesus "God". He called him "the Son of God" in its Jewish sense: he had simply possessed God's "powers" and "Spirit," which manifested God's activity on earth and were not to be identified with the inaccessible divine essence. Not surprisingly, in the Gentile world the new Christians did not always retain the sense of these subtle distinctions, so that eventually a man who had stressed his weak, mortal humanity was believed to have been divine."[447]

Long before Armstrong, A. Harnack emphasized the point observing: "Under the influence of the Messianic dogmas, and led by the impression which Christ made, Paul became the author of the speculative idea that not only was God in Christ, but that Christ himself was possessed of a peculiar nature a heavenly kind. With the Jews, this was not a notion that necessarily shattered the framework of the Messianic idea; but with the Greeks it inevitably set an entirely new theory in motion. Christ's *appearance* in itself, the entrance of a divine being into the world, came of necessity to rank as the chief fact, as itself *the real redemption*. Paul did not, indeed, himself look upon it in this light; for him the crucial facts are the death on the cross and the resurrection, and he regards Christ's entrance into the world from an ethical point of view and as an example for us to follow: "For our sake he became poor"; he humbled himself and renounced the world. But this state of things could not last."[448]

How could this radical change of direction and perspective have occurred in the minds of the early Christians, who inherited the Jewish Bible from Jesus containing passages that leave no room for any partner, equal, or rival for God. There was, as is commonly held, " no sign of any difference between their ideas of God and the ideas of their countrymen. They too worshipped the one and only God, creator and ruler of the world, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob...."[449] Why then some of the New Testament books attribute the creation, universal cosmic lordship,

omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience and eternity to Jesus, worship him and pray to him with absolute terms like "Kyrios".

Bousset in his classic book *Kyrios Christo* and following him R. Bultmann in his *Theology of the New Testament* maintained that this radical change was an outcome of cultic veneration. When the Rabbi or Master Jesus became the object of cultic veneration the titles like Lord changed into absolute tones of glory, power and authority and became "the one Lord". This radical change took place when Christianity moved from Palestine to Antioch, from the Jewish to the Hellenistic environment. Christ worship first began there and the titles got used in a more and more absolute sense in the early Christian writings that belong to that environment. Following this thesis McGiffert argues, "In passing from Jews to Gentiles the faith of the original disciples was thus transformed and instead of a Jewish Messianic sect there came into existence a new religion, one of the many religions of personal salvation in the Roman Empire."[450]

Others like Cullmann and Moule, for instance, disagree with this thesis. Cullmann argues that "it can by no means be proved that the Hellenistic Churches were the first to worship Jesus as divine."[451] He further maintains that "this worship took place in the very earliest Church, and not for the first time in Antioch."[452]

He discusses at length the philology of the ancient Aramaic prayer *Maranatha* which have occurred in various New Testament passages like 1 Corinthians 22-24 and concludes that the Aramaic word *'Mar'* "Lord" constitutes the clue that determines how the Hellenistic word Kyrios got used for Jesus in absolute sense. "The non-Christian use of the Kyrios name in the Hellenistic world, its relation to emperor worship, and above all its use as the name of God in Septuagint-all this certainly contributed to making *Kyrios* an actual *title* for Christ. But this development would not have been possible had not the original Church already called upon Christ as the Lord. Bouusset is right in saying that the *Kyrios* title goes back to the experience of the Church's worship; but it is the experience of worship in the *original* Church."[453]

Moule maintains the same when he argues, "I am not for a moment denying that developed language about cosmic dimensions might be the fruit of long speculation and cogitation; but I am inclined to believe that a good case could be made for the ingredients for such conclusions being present immediately in the experience of the risen Christ."[454] F.V. Filson argues that "from the first days of the Apostolic Church an explicit and high Christology was an integral part of its message, and that this Christology was basically no Hellenistic product, but had its chief ties with the Old Testament and found expression in the earliest Apostolic preaching."[455]

Filson and others fail to prove the point from the Old Testament itself. It seems likely that the process of treating Jesus as a Deity equal to God in attributes and works was the result of non-Jewish influences external to the environment of Jesus himself and his immediate disciples as is clear from Harnack and others. H. Anderson observes that "In the picture he draws of the "Lord Jesus Christ, "Paul unquestionably makes use of mythological concepts prevalent in the Hellenistic milieu."[456] The disciples may have exalted him, but what we have seen in the above quoted passages is more than just exaltation. He has been made equal to God (Rom. 1:4), and it is

not robbery to become equal with God as Paul says in Phil. 2:6, "Who, being in the form of God, thought not robbery to be equal with God."

In addition to the passages quoted above there are at least two other passages in the Gospel of John that call Jesus, the Word, as "God". Cullmann argues that "Since it is clear that the New Testament arrives at the conception of Jesus' deity in the sense indicated from the standpoint of a group of basic Christological ideas, the question whether it also actually designates him `God' is only of secondary importance."[457] But this designation is extremely crucial for our study of anthropomorphism because if Jesus is adorned with all the majestic attributes of divinity, eternity, absolute cosmic Lordship, equality with God, worship and is finally designated with the title `God' itself then it becomes impossible to say that the New Testament concept of deity/Jesus is not anthropomorphic.

Jesus never called himself God, nor did the first three evangelists, the authors of the Synoptic Gospels. It is, in the opinion of Cullmann, "the Gospel of John and Hebrews (that) provide the clearest and least ambiguous evidence of the attribution of *Oeos* to Jesus."[458] In John 1:1 it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*" In John 20 it says, "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, *My Lord and my God.*" (Jn.20:26-28)

To this designation with the absolute title `God' the fourth evangelist presents Jesus as not responding negatively. He seems to have approved it when he is quoted to have said," Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (Jn. 20:29).

If therefore, according to Cullmann, the " whole Gospel culminates in this confession, and, on the other hand, the author writes in the first verse of the first chapter, "And the Logos *was God*', then there can be no doubt that for him all the other titles for Jesus which are prominent in his work ('Son of Man', 'Son of God', 'Lord', and in the prologue, 'Logos') ultimately point toward this final expression of his Christological faith."[459]

Outside the Johannine corpus it is only Hebrews that unequivocally applies the title `God' to Jesus. In Hebrews 1:6-8 which has been translated in more than one way, in one of its translations it says," And again when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM. And the angels saith, WHO MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE. But unto the *Son he saith,* **THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER**: A SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM." (Heb.1:6-8) Luther derives true Godhead of Jesus from these verses arguing that " Although we read that the angels were worshipped by Moses, by Lot and Abraham, and by Joshua and other prophets...yet nowhere do we read that angels worshipped any angel or man. Therefore there is firm proof that the man Christ is true God, because it is recorded that He is worshipped by the angels, not only by some but by every one of them."[460]

Luther translates verse 8 the way it is translated above and observes: "But everything that is said in this verse is so inconsistent with all understanding that those who want to grasp the truth of these things have need of an exceedingly robust faith. For if considered according to the outward appearance, nothing is more unlike a throne and the throne of God than the people of Christ, since it does not seem to be a kingdom but a place of exile, or to be living but to be constantly dying, or to be in glory but in disgrace, or to dwell in wealth but to dwell in extreme poverty, as everyone who wants to share in this kingdom is compelled to experience in himself."[461]

Perhaps this is due to the influence of Pauline and Johannine Christology that the Apostolic Fathers felt no hesitation to confess Jesus' divinity and deity. Ignatius, for instance, asserted the pre-existence of Jesus Christ in the following words. He "was with the Father before the world, and appeared at the end of time." Christ is "His Word (Logos) that proceeded from silence." Ignatius further argued, that " There is only one physician of flesh and of spirit, generate and ungenerate, God in man."[462] It has been observed that "Ignatius gives to Christ repeatedly the name "God", not as if He were God absolutely, yet implying proper divinity."[463]

It seems clear from the above discussion that some of the New Testament books, especially if understood in light of the later theological developments, have probably exalted Jesus the Christ to the status of proper divinity and made him, in certain passages, equal to God. Though there are various interpretations given to these passages, the possibility of deriving the later christological claims of absolute divinity (like that of Father in all respects) is questionable, especially in light of the monotheistic passages in the New Testament books. There are several passages, particularly in the Synoptic Gospels, that emphasize Almighty God's absolute unity and uniqueness.(see Mk.12:29-32) However, the above quoted Pauline and Johannine passages can be treated as leading to some of the later claims about proper divinity of Christ with some artificial efforts on the part of the interpreter. On the other hand, there are other passages that lead to Jesus' subordination to God the Father and his adoption at baptism.(Lk.6:12, 10:22, Mt.19:17, 11:27, Jn.7:29-33, for adoption see Mt.3:16-17, Lk.3:22). Pelikan observes that the above mentioned "divinity" passages alongwith "subordination or adoption" passages, when studied in light of the four sets of Old Testament passages, ultimately speak of "Christ as divine". These four sets of Old Testament passages are: "Passages of adoption, which, by identifying a point in time at which he became divine, implied that the status of God was conferred on the man Jesus Christ at his baptism or at his resurrection; passages of identity, which, by speaking of Yahweh as "the Lord," posited a simple identification of Christ with God; passages of distinction, which, by speaking of one "Lord" and of another "Lord," drew some difference between them; and passages of derivation, which, by referring to the Father as "the greater" or using such titles as angel, Spirit, Logos, and Son, suggested that he "came from" God and was in some sense less than God."[464]

It must be added here that all the above mentioned passages do not prove the hard and absolute divinity of Jesus that has been believed by a great many traditional Christians. These passages could be interpreted as giving a divine status to Jesus, although leaving a number of important issues unresolved regarding Jesus' relationship with God and with human beings.

However, the early Church had no hesitation in assigning Jesus the proper divinity along with absolute divine titles, actions, attributes and functions.[465] Such an ascription to Jesus of proper divinity did not cause many problems as long as the faith was confined to the Christians interested solely in the salvation. It was God and God alone and nobody less than Him who could have brought salvation to the sin-ripped human beings. That is the implication from the oldest surviving sermon of the Christian church after the New Testament writings, saying, "Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God, as of the judge of living and dead. And we ought not to belittle our salvation; for when we belittle him, we expect also to receive little."[466] The problem surfaced when the Church had to face the external world and prove to them the significance and wisdom of Christian teachings. For the one whom Christians had called God was also the one who was born, lived an ordinary natural life for thirty or so years, ate, drank, suffered and was relentlessly crucified, and these were the realities which the Church itself witnessed. The Alexandrian philosopher Celsus' observations pinpoint the problem. He argued that "Everyone saw his suffering, but only a disciple and a half crazed woman saw him risen. His followers then made a God of him, like Antinous... The idea of the coming down of God is senseless. Why did God come down for justification of all things? Does not this make God changeable?"[467] The pagan Celsus vehemently attacked the Christian concept of the Deity and dubbed it as thoroughly corporeal and anthropomorphic. He concluded that "Christianity is not merely a religious revolution with profound social and political consequences; it is essentially hostile to all positive human values. The Christians say... `Do not ask questions, only believe'. They say, `Wisdom is foolishness with God'... they will flee to the last refuge of the intellectually destitute, `Anything is possible to God'."[468] Clement and Origen's statements regarding the difficulties of biblical anthropomorphisms and their insistence upon utter transcendence of God, as discussed above, were responses to such penetrating attacks.

In the words of Grillmeier "The hour had come for the birth of speculative theology, of theological reflection, of *theoligie savante*. The confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the *novum* of Christian faith... demanded of Christian theology a twofold demonstration, first that it was compatible with Jewish monotheism, and secondly that it was different from pagan polytheism"[469] There was pressure from within too. In the first place this confusion called forth some of the earliest doctrinal controversies in the Church itself and then forced the Church to become more precise and defend logically or in intelligible terms this seemingly contradictory position to the attacks of Jews and pagans. Within Christianity, voices like "his suffering was but a make believe" were raised by Marcion, Ptolemy and Gnostics. Marcion, for instance, absolutely denied Jesus' humanity. Jesus "was too lofty to be confined within the prison of the flesh."[470]

The Church while trying to defend Christs' humanity could not escape itself from the very problem it was trying to solve, the problem of `docetism', as J. Pelikan observes: " the historical principle that the line of demarcation between orthodoxy and heresy must not be drawn prematurely or too precisely is borne out by the evidence that such docetism was not confined to the Gnostics and other heretics, but was sufficiently widespread within the churches to evoke the reiterated warnings of early Christian writers. Although the overt assertion that "his suffering was but a make-believe " was the teaching of Gnostics and was early and easily identified as heretical, the example of Clement of Alexandria shows that docetizing tendencies, even among orthodox believers, must be seen as one way to "think of Jesus Christ as of God."[471] Bigg finds the Platonist

Clement "near to the confines of Docetism".[472] Moltmann observes that "The more it emphasized the divinity of Christ, making use of this concept of God, the more difficult it became to demonstrate that the Son of God who was of one substance with God was Jesus of Nazareth, crucified under Pontius Pilate. Consequently, a mild docetism runs through the christology of the ancient church."[473]

Christianity had no choice but to be a little more precise in its' teachings regarding the relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Christ to avert the intellectual attacks of paganism, Greek philosophy and Judaism in an effort to prove them its' validity. It was difficult for non-Christian Jews and pagans to understand the assertions of strict monotheism on one hand and divinity of Jesus Christ and suffering and crucifixion of the true God on the other hand.

The Christian apologists like Justin Martyr, Theophilus, Tatian, Aristides and Athenagoras responded to this rather embarrassing situation with philosophical suppositions and concepts to vindicate the truth of Christianity.[474] They tried to draw a rather clear line between God and Jesus using the philosophical concepts available.

Justin, the most renowned of them, insisted that though Jesus has come from God he is not identical with God. "The ineffable Father and Lord of all," he says, "neither comes anywhere nor walks nor sleeps nor rise up, but remains in his own place wherever that may be, quick to behold, quick to hear, not with eyes or ears but with indescribable power."[475] Justin conceived of God "as a transcendent being who could not possibly come into contact with the world of men or things. To suppose that he had appeared in Christ, had been born of a woman, and had finally died upon the cross seemed altogether absurd."[476] Strong belief in God's transcendence did not stop Justin from thinking of Jesus as divine. To defend Christ's relationship with God he made use of the current Christian phraseology and called Jesus the Son of God, Logos and also the Angel. Christ, according to him, was worthy of these titles on account of his wisdom, virgin birth and because he was God's first begotten Logos: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." The Son of God was not a man like other men. He is "generate- but in a special sense. He is God born of God, as fire is kindled by fire, or light is produced from the sun. That is, he is divine, but in a derivative or secondary way."[477] In the words of Norris "it was derivative, and for that reason inferior to the one God.... In Justin's system there truly was, in the last resort, only one ultimate God. The Logos represented a slightly lower level of divinity, something between the pure divinity of God and the nondivinity of creatures. Justin had made sense of the incarnational picture of Jesus by adopting a hierarchical picture of the world-order in which the Logos stands as a kind of bumper state between God and the world, and it is this fact that makes Justin's Christology problematic."[478] He was pre-existent Logos, God's agent in the creation, through whom all the creatures were created. Therefore, he can be called Lord and worshipped as divine but of second rank as Justin in one of his confessions puts it: "Thus we are not atheists, since we worship the creator of this universe...and that we with good reason honour Him Who has taught us these things and was born for this purpose, Jesus Christ, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate...having learned that He is the Son of the true God and holding Him in the second rank, and the prophetic Spirit third in order, we shall proceed to demonstrate."[479]

Justin could not have convinced his Jewish counterparts with such kind of hierarchical interpretations of Godhead and derivative nature of divinity. Monotheism stood in his way as an insurmountable hurdle. He adopted another way trying to prove that the Jewish Scriptures bore witness to two Gods: first the transcendent, supreme, unbegotten, ingenerate God, the ineffable Father, who never appeared on the earth, and secondly, the God of theophanies, who came down to earth on several occasions and finally became incarnate in Christ. In his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, he argued the matter at length, "I will give you, my friends, another testimony from the Scriptures that as a beginning before all creatures God begat from himself a certain rational power which is called by the Holy Spirit now Glory of the Lord, again Wisdom, again Angel, again God, again Lord, and Logos. Also he called himself Captain of the host when appeared to Jesus the Son of Nave in the form of a man. For he can be called by all these names since he serves the Father's will and was begotten of the Father by will."[480] And "when my God says 'God went up from Abraham,' or 'the Lord spake unto Moses,' and 'the Lord came down to see the tower which the sons of men had built,'... you must not imagine that the unbegotten God himself came down or went up anywhere....Therefore not Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob nor any other man saw the Father and ineffable Lord of all and of Christ himself as well, but they saw him who according to his will was at once God, his Son, and the angel who ministered to his will, and who it pleased him should be born man by the Virgin; who also was fire when he spake with Moses from the bush."[481]

As the passage just quoted indicates, to Justin, the Christ was the Logos, the divine reason, the second God of the Old Testament theophanies, begotten before the creation of the world, who became incarnate in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. Justin also called the *Logos* as the servant, the angel, the apostle. Grillmeier observes that "In calling the Logos the servant, the apostle, the angel of the absolutely transcendent Father, Justin gives him a diminished transcendence, even if he does not make him a creature. He compares the Logos with Herms, the Logos-interpreter of Zeus... There is a *deus inferior* subordinate to the *theos hypsistos.*"[482] The other apologists like Tatian and Hippolytus followed Justin in his ideas of God's transcendence, ineffability, immutability and otherness while maintaining his Logos Christology. Tatian, for instance, argued that "The Lord of all, who is himself the ground of everything, was alone, in so far as the creation had not yet come to pass"[483] Therefore there was no eternal pre-existent Logos in a distinct existence.

J.N.D. Kelly underlines the two most important points that were common among all the Apologists, "(a) that for all of them the description `God the Father' connoted, not the first Person of the Holy Trinity, but the one Godhead considered as author of whatever exists; and (b) that they all, Athenagoras included, dated the generation of the Logos, and His eligibility for the title `Son', not from His origination within the being of the Godhead, but from His emission or putting forth for the purposes of creation, revelation and redemption. Unless these points are firmly grasped, and their significance appreciated, a completely distorted view of the Apologists' theology is liable to result. Two stock criticisms of it, for example, are that they failed to distinguish the Logos from the Father until He was required for the work of creation,. and that, as a corollary, they were guilty of subordinating the Son to the Father. These objections have a superficial validity in the light of post-Nicene orthodoxy, with its doctrine of the Son's eternal generation and its fully worked out conception of Hypostases or Persons; but they make no sense

in the thought-atmosphere in which the Apologists moved."[484] Kelly further argues: "when, Justin spoke of Him as a `second God' worshipped `in a secondary rank', and when all the Apologists stressed that His generation or emission resulted from an act of Father's will, their object was not so much to subordinate Him as to safeguard the monotheism which they considered indispensable. The Logos as manifested must necessarily be limited as compared with the Godhead Itself; and it was important to emphasize that there were not two springs of initiative within the Divine Being. That the Logos was one in essence with the Father, inseparable in His fundamental being from Him as much after His generation as prior to it, the Apologists were never weary of reiterating."[485]

Grillmeier, on the other hand, argues that "The coming Arian struggles are no more than the consequence of the error which was introduced at the time of the Apologists. The error lay in the fact that the Stoic Logos was essentially monistic, and was understood in relation to the world. As Middle Platonism and also Alexandrian Judaism overstressed the absolute transcendence of God, his invisibility and his unknowableness, the Logos was too much restricted to the role of subordinate mediator. God the Father was thought to have such an absolute transcendence that he could not possibly deal actively with men (R. Holte). The danger of subordination was not far off. This danger was increased by the idea which linked too closely together the procession of the Logos and the creation of the world, the creation and redemption of man."[486]

Church Fathers like Tertullian and Origen clearly maintained the apologists positions in regards to Christ's relationship with God. Tertulian accepting Justin's mediatorial idea of Logos differentiated between God and Jesus, the Word, by arguing,"by him who is invisible, we must understand the Father in the fullness of his majesty, while we recognize the Son as visible by reason of dispensation of his derived existence."[487] Tertullian in his treatise *Against Praxeas* explained that the Logos first existed in God as his Reason and then was "made a second" to God, or "uttered" as the Word through whom all the things were made. There is a crystal clear demarcation line in Tertullian between God the Father and Logos emphasizing the mediatorial and secondary character of Logos and his "derivation and portion", to use his terms, from the father's divine substance.[488] He observes that "With regard to him (the Logos), we are taught he is derived from God and begotten by derivation so that he is Son of God and called God because of the unity of substance."[489]

God's transcendence and *monarchia* is preserved as the Son uses the powers and the rule given to him by the Father. The Son will give it back to the Father at the end of this world period. Moreover, as Grillmeier observes, "The Father is the guarantee of the unity of God, of the *monarchia.* The Son is assigned the second and the Spirit the third place. Here Tertullian is thinking not of a purely static threeness within God, the metaphysical Trinity, but of an economic, organic, dynamic threeness i.e. for him the second and third persons proceed from the *unitas substantiae* because they have a task to fulfill. Only the Father remains completely transcendent."[490] G. L. Prestige views the same organic unity in Tertullian thought: " The unity constitutes the tiade out of his own inherent nature, not by any process of sub-division, but by reason of a principle of constructive integration which the Godhead essentially possesses. In other words, his idea of unity is not mathematical, but philosophical; it is an organic unity, not an abstract, bare point."[491] It is Tertullian who introduced the concept of 'person' in christology. He argued that the triune God is one in substance and different in person: "You have two

(Father-Son), one commanding a thing to be made, another making it. But how you must understand "another" I Have already professed, in the sense of person, not of substance."[492] Grillmeier observes that " Tertullian's particular contribution to the problem of the unity of Christ is the introduction of the concept of person into christology, and the christological formula thus formed, which already seems to point to the formula of Chalcedon."[493]

Origen also emphasized the derivative, intermediary and secondary role of Jesus. "As an act of will proceeds from the mind without either cutting off any part of the mind or separated or divided from it, in some similar fashion has the Father begotten the Son."[494] He differs from Justin and Tertullian in saying that the Logos is the eternal self-expression of God and is of the same substance as God, "The Father did not beget the Son once for all, and let him go after he was begotten but he is always begetting him."[495] Origen's idea of the eternal generation of the Logos did not mean that he made the Logos equal with God. In his treatise *Against Celsus* he clearly differentiated between the Logos and the God by making the Logos subordinate to the latter and so declaring him in some sense less than God and a "second God".[496] McGiffert commenting on Origen's Logos Christology observes that there is marked subordinationism in Origen because he was "always more interested in the subordination of the Son to the Father than his oneness with him."[497] Kelly writes, that "the impact of Platonism reveals itself in the thoroughgoing subordinationism which is integral to Origen's Trinintarian scheme."[498] Kelly further observes that "The unity between Father and Son corresponds to that between light and its brightness, water and the steam which rises from it. Different in form, both share the same essential nature; and if, in the strictest sense, the Father alone is God, that is not because the Son is not also God or does not possess the Godhead, but because, as Son, He possesses it by participation or derivatively."[499] Bigg observes that "We shall however wrong Origen, if we attempt to derive his subordinationism from metaphysical considerations. It is purely Scriptural, and rests wholly and entirely upon the words of Jesus, 'My Father is greater than I', 'That they may know Thee the only true God', 'None is Good save One'."[500]

Kelly further argues that "It is not altogether fair to conclude, as many have done, that Origen teaches a triad of disparate beings rather than a Trinity; but the strongly pluralist strain in his Trinitarianism is its salient feature. The Three, on his analysis, are eternally and really distinct; they are separate hypostases or even, in his crude-sounding language, 'things'. But he attempts to meet the most stringent demands of monotheism by insisting that the fullness of unoriginate Godhead is concentrated in the Father, Who alone is 'the fountain-head of deity'... The Son and the Spirit are divine (in fact, he is remarkably reticent about the latter's status), but the Godhead which They possess, and which constitutes Their essence, wells up and is derived from the Father's being."[501] They are of secondary rank and merit secondary honour. Therefore " we should not pray to any generate being, not even to Christ, but only to the God and Father of the universe, to Whom our Saviour Himself prayed'; if prayer is offered to Christ, it is conveyed by Him to the Father. Indeed, the Son and the Spirit are transcended by the Father just as much as, if not more than, They Themselves transcend the realm of inferior beings; and if sometimes Origen's language seems to contradict this, suggesting that the Son is God from the beginning, very Word, absolute Wisdom and truth, the explanation is that He may appear such to creatures, but from the viewpoint of the ineffable Godhead He is the first in the chain of emanations. This conception of a descending hierarchy, itself the product of his Platonizing background, is epitomized in the

statement that, whereas the Father's action extends to all reality, the Son's is limited to rational beings, and the Spirit's to those who are being sanctified."[502]

Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria were perhaps more traditionalists than philosophers looking for intellectual interpretations to denote relationship between Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. They differed with the apologists in their understanding of Logos Christology. To both, the Logos who became incarnate in Jesus Christ was no less than God himself. Irenaeus in his famous treatise *Against Heresies* argued that " the Logos who "existed in the beginning with God," "through whom everything was made," and who has always been humanity's companion is the one who, in the last days, at the moment preordained by the Father, was united to the creature he had shaped, and became a human being subject to hurt. Consequently, there is no place for the objection of those who say, "If the Christ was born at that moment, then he did not exist prior to it." We have shown that, since he has always existed with the Father, he did not begin to be God's Son at that particular point."[503] He further argued that "it was impossible for a humanity which had fallen under the domination of sin to lay hold on salvation. Therefore, the Son accomplished the both things. Existing as God's Logos, he descended from the Father and became enfleshed and humbled himself to the point of death and completed God's program for our salvation."[504] While emphasizing the salvation he maintained that "the Logos of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who on account of his great love became what we are that he might make us what he is himself."[505] "How can they be saved unless it be God who wrought out their salvation on earth? And how shall man be changed into God unless God has been changed into man?"[506] Therefore, "The Logos of God became a human being, and the Son of God was made Son of man, so that humanity, having received the Logos and accepted adoption, might become Son of God. The only way in which we could receive incorruption and immortality was by being united with them. But how could we be united with incorruption and immortality unless first of all they became what we are, so that "that corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruption and the mortal by immortality" [1 Cor. 15:53-54] and so we might receive adoption as son?"[507]

To think of the Logos in derivative terms and to subordinate him to God or think of him as another being as Apologists did, to Irenaeus, was detrimental to his saving work and hence impossible. He identified the Logos or the Son with the Father completely. "Through the Logos himself made visible and palpable the Father was shown forth although not all alike believed in him. But all saw the Father in the Son. For the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son is the visible of the Father."[508] And again "But God being all mind and all Logos what he thinks he says and what he says he thinks. For his thought is Logos and Logos is mind and mind comprehending all things is itself the Father."[509] In short the Logos is God but God revealed and not God unapproachable, inaccessible and apart from the world.

Clement of Alexandria, in spite of his Platonist inclinations, to Kelly "was a moralist rather than a systematic theologian",[510] takes an almost identical course in determining Jesus' relationship with God. Jesus to him is neither derived nor a secondary or subordinate divine being but God divine in his own rights. Bigg observes that "the idea of subordination is strictly secondary in Clement. The text 'None is good save One' does not mean to him what it meant to his scholar."[511] In the tenth chapter of his " Protrepticus " Clement calls him " the truly most manifest God."[512] The Son was not generate, "His generation from the Father is without beginning ('the Father is not without

His Son'); and He is essentially one with Him, since the Father is in Him and He in the Father."[513] Bigg observes that "Clement's mode of statement is such as to involve necessarily the Unity, Equality, and Eternity of the First and Second Persons. It has been asserted, that he hardly leaves sufficient room for a true distinction of Hypostasis."[514] He further observes that "So complete is the union, that he does not hesitate to transfer to the Son the peculiar titles of the Father. If the one is `beyond all intelligible', so also is the other; if the one is Almighty, so also is the other; and, following the example of Philo and Justin, Clement applies to the Son passages of the Old Testament, where Lord is employed as the substitute for Jehovah."[515] Like Ireneaus he declares the Son to be God in relations, " through the Logos God creates and governs and reveals. In himself he is far away and inaccessible, but in Logos he is near and pervades all beings."[516]

One can see the difficulties involved in quoting Clement as the Christian intellectual thinker who insisted upon the sheer transcendence of the Deity. To him "Jesus alone is both God and Man. He who is God became Man, that we might become gods."[517] It has been doubted whether he ascribed to Jesus a human soul but it is certain that he insisted that "His Flesh was not wholly like ours..."[518] In view of such a manifest insistence upon the unity and equality of Christ with God, it is extremely difficult to present Clement as the herald and hero of the Christian transcendental God Paradigm. Many a modern scholars seem to make such an assertion about Clement.

Kelly, however, argues that Clement "clearly distinguishes the Three, and the charge of modalism, based on his lack of any technical term to designate the Persons, is groundless; and if he appears to subordinate the Son to the Father and the Spirit to the Son, this subordination implies no inequality of being, but is the corollary of his Platonic conception of a graded hierarchy."[519] Grillmeier argues that "It is true that Clement has repeatedly been suspected of docetism, but he consistently maintains the reality of the human nature of Christ, though at the same time his tendency to spiritualize seems to make the reality of the incarnation merely relative. Attempts have also been made to interpret the figure of Christ which Clement presents as the union of the Logos with a mere unsouled fleshly nature, a position where the special significance of the Logos in Alexandrian christology would become manifest. Put in these terms, however, such an interpretation is mistaken. The tradition of Christ's soul is clearly still so vigorous that even the teaching of animation through the Logos cannot obscure it. Nevertheless, we find in Clement precisely that element of the non-Christian Logos doctrine which leads to the total obscuring of the distinction between Logos and soul in his christology." [520]

We can conclude this part of the discussion by the observation that untill the second century A.D., the Christian God Paradigm in general and the doctrine of Christ's Person were not fixed. It was flexible, fluid and confusing. The ideas of subordination, derivative and secondary rank of the Christ were common among thoughtful Christians like Justin and Origin. The traditionalists as well as the orthodox Church, if we can possibly use the term for convenience purposes, inclined more towards Unity, Equality and Eternity of the Christ, and that on par with God the Father, but not without confusions and problems. It seems like Docetism. They were accused of corporealism, anthropomorphism, and irrationalism by their opponents, as we have already seen in the case of Celsus.

The Monarchians:

From the start, the belief that Christ was a god was common among many Christians, especially the Gentiles. There were many who felt it degrading to assign Jesus a secondary or subordinated position. To "associate another God with him and particularly to put another God above him offended them deeply. If it were necessary to recognize a creating as well as saving God, then the Lord Jesus Christ whom they worshipped, and faith in whom had brought them into the Christian church, was himself creator as well as saviour; they neither knew nor cared to know any other God apart from him."[521] There are traces of such tendencies among Christians during Justin's times who in his Apology makes explicit references to groups such as these. Writing in the early third century Hippolytus of Rome observed, "Cleomenes and his followers declare that he (Christ) is the God and Father of the universe."[522] They were later called "Modalist Monarchians".

J.N.D. Kelly well summarizes 'Modalistic Monarchianism' as follows: "This was a fairly widespread, popular trend of thought which could reckon on, at any rate, a measure of sympathy in official circles; and the driving-force behind it was the twofold conviction, passionately held, of the oneness of God and the full deity of Christ. What forced it into the open was the mounting suspicion that the former of these truths was being endangered by the new Logos doctrine and by the efforts of theologians to represent the Godhead as having revealed Itself in the economy as tri-personal. Any suggestion that the Word or Son was other than, or a distinct Person from, the Father seemed to the modalists (we recall that the ancient view that 'Father' signified the Godhead Itself was still prevalent) to lead inescapably to blasphemy of two Gods."[523] It was Praxeas (c. 210 C.E.) and then Noetus, both of Asia Minor, who gave this belief a regular theological touch around 200 A.D. They argued that the whole of God was present in Jesus. It was Sabellius (c. 215 C.E.) who became the most vocal and important theologian of the movement. Their position was quite simple. There is no God but the one creator and sustainer of the world as stated in the Scriptures. Christ was God. Then he is that creator whom people call as Father. They made use of passages of Identity like "I and the Father are one" and stressed absolute likeness and identity of Jesus with God. Hippolytus quotes them saying," there exists one and same Being, called Father and Son, not one derived from the other, but himself from himself, nominally called Father and Son according to changing of times; and that this One is that appeared [to the patriarchs], and submitted to birth from a virgin, and conversed as man among men. On account of his birth that has taken place he confessed himself to be the Son to those who saw him, while to those who could receive it he did not hid the fact that he was the Father."[524] Epiphanius quotes Sabellians as saying, "Do we have one God or three?" If one, then words of Isaiah 44:6 applied also to Christ: "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; beside me there is no God."[525]

Kelly observes that we cannot be sure of all the details of the position ascribed to Sabellius as "Most of the surviving evidence dates from a century or more after his lifetime, when his theology and that of the much more familiar Marcellus of Ancyra were hopelessly confused. One point which seems to be established is that the traditional belief that he spoke of Father, Son and Spirit as three *prosopa,* in the sense of masks or outward appearances, is erroneous. The term... was used by Hippolytus to signify the otherness, or separate subsistence, of the Son, as revealed in the economy, from the father, and it is most unlikely that Sabellius used it with a diametrically opposite meaning. Indeed, Hippolytus clearly implies that for Callistus, whom he regarded as a

Sabellian, the Godhead was but a single *prosopon*, i.e. individual or Person."[526] It seems that Sabellians, as they were called, were interested in monotheism. "It was his interest in monotheism" observes Harnack, "that influenced Sabellius."[527] They accused orthodox Christians, as Tertullian reports, of polytheism, "they accuse us of preaching two and three Gods while they claim that they are worshippers of one God."[528] As a result, Tertullian gave them the name "Monarchians" which has clung to them to this day. Historically they are called the 'Modalist Monarchians'.

This extreme position and preciseness in regards to Jesus' relationship with God may have been an off-shoot of orthodox teachings and underlying ambiguity, as Harnack observes: "many facts observed in reference to the earliest bodies of Monarchians that come clearly before us, seem to prove that they bore features which must be characterized as pre-Catholic, but not un-Catholic." Worshipping Jesus with absolute titles like the Lord and explicitly calling him God could have led anybody to eradicate the distinction between Jesus and God. We are told that phrases such as "God is born," "the suffering God," or "the dead God" were so widespread among Christians that even Tertullian, for all his hostility to the Modolist Monarchians, could not escape using them. Therefore, "taken as it stands, that is, as Hippolytus and Tertullian have reported it, this doctrine of the relation between Christ and God turns out to have been a systematization of popular Christian belief."[530] It was a bold step towards giving a precise theological color to the rather ambiguous Christian devotional language but the Church could not accept it because of its' implications. It was nothing but naive anthropomorphism and patripassianism. Though it safeguarded Jesus' deity as well as monotheism, the objective for which the Church had been aspiring, the Church could not approve of it in such bold terms because of its' subtle implications. Linwood Urban observes that "If the whole of God is present in the historic Jesus, the *transcendence* of God is nullified. The Pre-Nicene solution asserts that there is part of God which is not incarnate, and so allows for God to transcend his presence in Jesus."[531]

In his work *Against Praxeas* Tertullian explains the reason arguing, "How is it that the omnipotent, invisible God, whom no man hath seen or can see, who inhabiteth light inaccessible...how is it, I say, that the Most High should have walked at evening in paradise seeking Adam,...unless these things were an image and a type and an allegory? These things indeed could not have been believed even of the Son of God, had they not been written; perhaps they could have not believed of the Father even had they been written. For these persons bring him down into Mary's womb, place him at Pilot's tribunal, and shut him in the tomb of Joseph. Hence their error becomes evident....Thus they believe that it was always one God, the Father, who did the things which were really done through the Son."[532] God's transcendence and ineffability was at stake, so the defenders of orthodoxy except Zephyrinus, the bishop of Rome, condemned this group of Monarchians as heretics. Then formally, in the sixth-century Synod of Braga orthodoxy decreed that "If anyone does not confess that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are three persons of one essence and virtue and power, as the catholic apostolic church teaches, but says that [they are] a single and solitary person, in such a way that the Father is the same as the Son and this One is also the Paraclete Spirit, as Sabellius and Priscillian have said, let him be anathema."[533] In order to preserve God's transcendence and stability, observes Urban, "Trinitarians were ready to give up the divine simplicity. Trinitarians assert that, although God is one and simple in most respects, there are some in which he is Triune."[534]

The Monarchian anthropomorphic position has continued to crop up even after its condemnation. For through-out Christian history " men have been frequently condemned for denying the deity of Christ but rarely for denying the distinction between the Father and the Son. To deny the former has generally seemed unchristian; to deny the latter only unintelligent."[535]

In spite of strong opposition, Modalism or the crystal clear anthropomorphic concept of God remained widespread, especially among the simpleminded and ordinary Christians. It was shared, as observes McGiffert, "by the majority of the common people and was in harmony with the dominant piety of the age. "What harm am I doing in glorifying Christ?" was the question of Noetus and in it he voiced the sentiment of multitudes."[536]

Dynamic Monarchianism:

Meanwhile, another kind of Monarchianism became current both in the East and West and took the question of Jesus' relationship with God to the other extreme. In the west Theodotus (c. 190 C.E.), the leather-worker, who was afterwards "characterized as the "founder, leader, and father of the God-denying revolt," (adoptionism),[537] taught regarding the Person of Christ, "that Jesus was a man, who, by a special decree of God, was born of a virgin through the operation of the Holy Spirit; but that we were not to see in him a heavenly being, who had assumed flesh in the virgin. After the piety of his life had been thoroughly tested, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in baptism; by this means he became Christ and received his equipment...for his special vocation; and he demonstrated the righteousness, in virtue of which he excelled all men, and was, of necessity, their authority. Yet the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus was not sufficient to justify the contention that he was now "God"."[538] Such an understanding of Jesus, observes Urban, "preserved the simplicity of God, but at the price of unfaithfulness to the tradition."[539]

In the East this movement was significantly revived under the leadership of Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch, the capital of Queen Zenobia of Palmyra's kingdom. There, says Fisher, "he exercised an authority almost equivalent to that of a viceroy."[540] He propounded a peculiar form of dynamic theory by opposing the already dominant doctrine of the essential natural deity of Christ. He taught that Jesus was merely a man from beneath and not one in substance with God. The "Redeemer was by the constitution of his nature a man, who arose in time by birth; he was accordingly "from beneath", but the Logos of God inspired him from above. The union of the Logos with the man Jesus is to be represented as an indwelling by means of an inspiration acting from without, so the Logos becomes that in Jesus which in the Christian is called by the Apostle " the inner man"; ...the Logos dwelt in Jesus not " in substance but in quality".... Therefore the Logos is to be steadily distinguished from Jesus; he is greater than the latter. Mary did not bear the Logos, but a man like us in his nature, and in his baptism it was not the Logos, but the man, was anointed with the Spirit. However, Jesus was, on the other hand, vouchsafed the divine grace in a special degree, and his position was unique. Moreover, the proof he gave of his moral perfection corresponded to his peculiar equipment. The only unity between two persons, accordingly between God and Jesus, is that of the disposition and the will."[541]

As Jesus advanced in the manifestation of goodness and submission to the will of God, he became the "Redeemer and Savior of the human race, and at the same time entered into an eternally indissoluble union with God, because his love can never cease. Now he has obtained from God, as the reward of his love, the name which is above every name; God has committed to him the Judgment, and invested him with divine dignity, so that now we can call him "God" [born] of the virgin". So also we are entitled to speak of a pre-existence of Christ in the prior decree and prophecy of God, and to say that he became God through divine grace and his constant manifestation of goodness."[542] It is clear that Paul did not believe in the divine nature of Jesus. On the other hand, in addition to his adoptionism, he sought to prove that the assumption that Jesus has the divine nature or was by nature Son of God "led to having two gods, to the destruction of Monotheism."[543] He became God but somehow, as says, Paul Tillich,"he had to deserve to become God."[544] He banished from divine service all Church psalms that expressed in any sense the essential divinity of Christ.

Paul was condemned at a Synod of Antioch held in 268, two earlier synods having failed to take action in the matter. He was declared as heretical because he denied Jesus' pre-existence and his unity of substance with God or in other words his proper divinity.

Though both types of Monarchianisms were condemned as heretical they, in different ways, challenged and pushed the orthodoxy to look into the immense difficulties involved in their understanding of the transcendence and unity of God and clarify it in intelligible terms. The orthodox Fathers insisted upon their concept of relative unity of God by holding to their Logos Christology. By the end of the third century the Logos Christology became generally accepted in all parts of the church and found its place in most of the creeds framed in that period, especially in the East.[545]

Arianism:

Though the official Logos Christology, or belief in the divine nature of Jesus, disposed of the divine-human doctrine of Dynamic Monarchianism, their doctrine did not pass without leaving a trace. Lucian and Arius were inspired, as observes Harnack, "by the genius of Paul."[546] Arius, to use Kelly's term "the arch-heretic Arius", a presbyter from Alexandria, who according to W. Bright, was "a man of mark", "went about from house to house, energetically propagating opinions which caused, by degrees, a vehement excitement, in regards to the nature of the Son of God.[547] Miss Dorthy Sayers has neatly paraphrased the impact of Arius' views saying:

> "If you want the logos doctrine, I can serve it hot and hot:
> God beget him and before he was begotten he was not."[548]

Arius maintained that God is one both in substance and in person. He is the only eternal and unoriginated being. The Logos, the pre-existent being, is merely a creature. There was a time when he was not and then was created by the Father out of nothing. "If the Son of God is real *Son*, then what is true in all cases of paternal and filial relationship is true in this case. But what is true in regard to such relationship is, that a father exists before a son. Therefore, the Divine Father existed before the Divine Son. Therefore, once the Son did not exist. Therefore, He was made, like all creatures, of an essence or being which previously had been non-existent."[549] Arius,

observes Norris, "was a firm believer not only in the unity of God but also in a doctrine of divine transcendence which saw God's way of being as inconsistent with that of the created order. Logically enough, therefore, his doctrine of the Logos was so formulated as to express two convictions: first, that the Logos cannot be God in the proper sense; second, that the Logos performs an essential mediatorial role in the relation of God to world. He taught, accordingly, that the Logos belongs to the created order but at the same time that he is quite superior creature, ranking above all others because he was brought into being by God "before the ages" to act as the agent of God in creation."[550] In Arius' words "The Father alone is God, and the Son is so called only in a lower and improper sense. He is not the essence of the Father, but a creature essentially like other creatures...or unique among them. His uniqueness may imply high prerogatives, but no creature can be a Son of God in the primary sense of full divinity."[551]Arius, observes Hilaire Belloc, "was willing to grant our Lord every kind of honour and majesty short of the full nature of the Godhead...He was granted one might say (paradoxically) all the divine attributes- except divinity."[552]

God is perfect but the Son of God advances in wisdom and knowledge and hence is changeable. The Son can be called Logos but is to be sharply distinguished from the eternal impersonal logos or reason of God. The essence of the Son is identical neither with that of God nor with that of human beings. The Son, who became incarnate in Jesus, is the first of all creatures and hence higher in order than any other being whether angels or men. Jesus did not have a human soul. "The soul of Christ was the Logos; only his body was human. As a consequence all that he did and suffered was done and suffered by the Logos."[553] Because of what he did during his earthly life, maintaining unswerving devotion to the divine will, the Son was given glory and lordship and would even be called "God" and worshipped. But to identify him with God's essence "is to commit blasphemy."[554] "So stark a monotheism", observes Pelikan, "implied an equally uncompromising view of divine transcendence."[555] Arius then was, we can conclude with Bright," speaking of Him as, after all, only the eldest and highest of creatures; not denying to him the title of God, but by limitations and glosses abating its real power."[556]

H. M. Gwatkin argues that "The Lord's deity had been denied often enough before, and so had his humanity; but it was reserved for Arianism at once to affirm and to nullify them both. The doctrine is heathen to the core, for the Arian Christ is nothing but a heathen demigod. But of the Jewish spirit it had absolutely nothing....the Arian confusion of deity and creaturedom was just as hateful to the Jew as to the Christian. Whatever sins Israel may have to answer for, the authorship of Arianism is not one of them."[557] He further argues, that "their doctrine was a mass of presumptuous theorizing, supported by alternate scraps of obsolete traditionalism and uncritical text-mongering, on the other it was a lifeless system of unspiritual pride and hard unlovingness."[558] T. E. Pollard argues that Arius transformed the "living God of the Bible" into the "absolute of the philosophical schools."[559]

This "half-god", to use Tillich's term, theology of Arius was rejected by the champions of orthodox Logos Christology and finally defeated as heresy. The reason, as Harnack contends, was, the very nature of Christian religion, "the defeated party had right on its side, but had not succeeded in making its Christology agree with its conception of the object and result of the Christian religion. This was the very reason of its defeat. A religion which promised its adherents

that their nature would be rendered divine, could only be satisfied by a redeemer who in his own person had deified human nature. If after the gradual fading away of eschatological hopes, the above prospect was held valid, then those were right who worked this view of the Redeemer." That is what was achieved by Athanasius in the Council of Nicea and the Logos Christology was victorious over its opponents once for all. And "when the Logos Christology obtained a complete victory, the traditional view of the Supreme deity as one person, and, along with this, every thought of the real and complete human personality of the Redeemer was condemned as being intolerable in the Church."[561]

New estimates of Arius' contributions to christological discussions have been made by modern scholars. Out of these new reconstructions a different picture of Arius is evolving. Francis Young, for instance, argues that " the Arius was not himself the arch-heretic of tradition, nor even much of an inquirer; rather he was a reactionary, a rather literal-minded conservative who appealed to scripture and tradition as the basis of his faith."[562] Like Barnard and Norris, Young argues that "The fact is that links can be traced between Arius' views and those of earlier Alexandrians, even if a continuous or coherent tradition cannot be established. Arius doctrine of God has affinities with Athenagoras and Clement, his subordinationism belongs to the Origenist tradition, his theological method is anticipated in Dionysius of Alexandria, and his biblical literalism may be connected with bishop Peter. Arius was guilty not so much of demoting the Son as exalting the Father; for, as Stead has shown, he taught a hierarchical Trinity of the Origenist type, a fact obscured by Athanasius for his own polemic purposes but confirmed by the reaction of Eusebius of Caesarea. Athanasius emphasized the fact that Arius ranked the logos among creatures; whereas Arius' main concern was probably to avoid attributing physical processes like emanation or generation to God, a traditional point developed earlier against the Gnostics. Arius therefore expressed coherently what many Christians had long since assumed."[563] Kelly observes that "the general mould of their teaching was undoubtedly Origenistic, and there are many striking points of resemblance between their subordinationism and that of Origen and, still more Dionysius."[564] Moreover, his opponents did not stick strictly to the scriptures either and were forced to adopt the non-scriptural, utterly philosophical as well as paradoxical term *homoousios* [of the same substance] to exclude his views. We may conclude, then, with F. Young that "Indeed, the popularity of his biblical solution to the tension between monotheism and faith in Christ is beyond dispute; and there is no reason to doubt Arius' sincerity or genuine Christian intention. Though his opponents attributed his popularity to deception, it is more likely that it was a response to one who was enthusiastic in his pursuit of true meaning of the Christian confession."[565] C. S. Lewis speaks of Arianism as "one of those `sensible' synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended today and which, then as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen."[566] In short, Arius was one of those adventurous souls who tried to get precise and find some solution to the unsolved problem of Christ's relationship with the Almighty God, the preciseness, which to the Church, would destroy the `mystery' of incarnation. This mystery was maintained by the Council of Nicea.

The Council of Nicea:

The Arian controversy caused division in the church. It was feared by the emperor that this rift would split the Roman Empire whose favored religion was Christianity. In June of 325 Emperor Constantine summoned the general assembly of bishops from all parts of the empire to meet at Nicea. There are extant several lists of the bishops who responded to the Emperor's call. The first of the five lists printed by C. H. Turner has different countings; the first, 218 names, the second, 210; the third, 223; the fourth, 221; and the fifth, 195 names. A Syriac list gives 220 names and two Latin lists given by Mansi give 227 and 204 names. Constantine's own letter to the Alexandrian speak of more than 300 bishops[567] while Athanasius, the stalwart of Arian controversy, writing soon after 350 A.D. fixes it at 318, the number generally accepted in the Eastern as well as the Western Church. One may conclude with Harnack that, "There were present about 300 (250, 270) bishops, hardly so many as 318 as asserted by Athanasius at a late time; the correctness of this latter number is open to suspicion."[568]

The prominent figure in the Arian controversy was St. Athanasius who, according to G. A. Meloney, "For forty years every word he wrote was a zealous defense, against the heretical Arians and non-Christians, of the divinity and equality of Jesus Christ with the Father."[569] He stood firm, strong and sure of the victory of traditional orthodoxy, of which he was a staunch representative, against Arians who denied the "real" Son of God. He, observes Meloney, was "considered by the early Church as the Father of Orthodoxy who, in his witness to the truth at the great councils, and through his innumerable writings, brilliantly illumined the mind of the traditional Church."[570] Frances Young gives a different view of the Saint observing that "The enhanced role of Athanasius at Nicaea is one feature of the 'legend of Athanasius' which rapidly developed. This `good tradition' has affected all the main sources, for Athanasius' own apologetic works were a primary source for the historians."[571] She further argues that "Alongside this `good tradition' however, there are traces of a less favourable estimates of Athanasius current among his contemporaries. Certainly he must have been a politician capable of subtle maneuvers; the first seems to have been in his own election, which was definitely contested, may have been illegal, and looks as though it was enforced. There seems to have been a pitiless streak in his character - that he resorted to violence to achieve his own ends is implied by a good deal of evidence."[572] To have a comprehensive discussion of the person is beyond our limitations. Therefore we will restrict ourselves just to his christology.

For Athanasius the central objective of Christian religion was "Redemption" and he subordinated every other thing to this objective. Archibald Robertson finds Athanasius' greatness in this all-pervasive view of Christ's redemption: "Athanasius was not a systematic theologian; that is, he produced no many-sided theology like that of Origen or Augustine. He had no interest in theological speculation, none of the instincts of a schoolman or philosopher. His theological greatness lies in his firm grasp of soteriological principles, in his resolute subordination of every thing else, even the formula *homoousia* [identical in nature, consubstantial], to the central fact of Redemption, and to what the fact implied as to the Person of the Redeemer."[573]

According to Athanasius 'Salvation' or 'Redemption' demands incarnation, "the salvation was possible only on one condition, namely, that the Son of God was made in Jesus so that we might

become God."[574] In his "*De Incarnatione et Contra Arianos*" he discussed the matter at length: "For in speaking of the appearance of the Savior amongst us, we must need speak also of the origin of men, that you may know that the reason of his coming down was because of us, and that our transgression called forth the loving-kindness of the Word, that the Lord should both make haste to help us and appear among men. For of his becoming incarnate we were the object, and for our salvation he dealt so lovingly as to appear and be born even in a human body. Thus, then, God was made man, and willed that he should abide in incorruption; but men, having despised and rejected the contemplation of God, and devised and contrived evil for themselves ...received the condemnation of death with which they had been threatened; and from thenceforth no longer remained as they were made, but were being corrupted according to their devices; and death had the mastery over them as king."[575] Hence "the rational man made in God's image was disappearing, and the handiwork of God was in process of dissolution."[576] Therefore "The Son of God became the Son of man in order that the sons of men, the sons of Adam, might be made sons of God. The Word, who was begotten of the Father in Heaven in an ineffable, inexplicable, incomprehensible and eternal manner, came to this earth to be born in time of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in order that they who were born of earth might be born again of God, in Heaven....He has bestowed upon us the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit, so that we may all become sons of God in imitation of the Son of God. Thus He, the true and natural Son of God, bears us all in Himself, so that we may all bear in ourselves the only God."[577]

In "*On the Incarnation*" Athanasius argued: "For he was made man that we might be made God; and he manifested himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and he endured the insolence of men that we might inherit immortality. For while he himself was in no way injured, being impassable and incorruptible and very Word and God, men who were suffering, and for whose sakes he endured all this, he maintained and preserved in his own impassability."[578] This human divinization was impossible if the Logos, who appeared to us in Jesus, was not the uncreated, eternal Son of God. In his "*Second Oration Against the Arians*" he argued that, "Nor again would man have been deified if joined to a created being, or if the Son were not true God, nor would man have come into the Father's presence unless he who took on a body were by nature and in truth his Logos. And as we should not have been freed from sin and the curse unless the flesh which the Logos assumed were real human flesh (for there could be no community between us and something foreign) so man would have not been made God unless the God who became flesh were by nature from the God and was truly and properly his....For we men should not have profited had the Logos not been true flesh any more than if he had not been truly and by nature Son of God."[579] Athanasius was careful to differentiate between Christ's divinity and man's divine sonship. Jesus is "Son in nature and truth, we are sons by appointment and grace."[580]

Therefore, the Son does not have any beginning; eternally the Father had the Son, "the beginning of the Son is the Father, and as the Father is without beginning therefore the Son as the Father's...is without beginning as well."[581] This statement, as says E.P. Meijering, is "a contradictory statement, saying that the Son has a beginning and that the Son has no beginning at the same time."[582] It seems that Athanasius was not much concerned with the philosophical implications of what he was saying. His concept of the Son's origin in the Father does imply the Son's beginning and in a way subordination which he emphatically denied. Anyway, observes Harnack, "Whatever involves a complete contradiction can not be corrected and everyone is

justified in unsparingly describing the contradiction as such."[583] On his part he argued that the Father is the Father only because he is the Father of the Son. As " the well without a river is dry well which is an absurdity in itself. Equally a Father without a Son would be an absurdity in Himself."[584] "The Son is the Father's image; He is the stream and the Father the source, He the brightness and the Father the light. Hence anyone who sees Christ sees the Father, "because of the Son's belonging to the Father's substance and because of His complete likeness to the Father."[585] Jesus, then, is the Logos, the Son of God from eternity, uncreated, ungenerated, of the very nature and substance of the Father. McGiffert observes that it was "not necessary according to Athanasius that Christ should be personally identical with God, that he and God should be the same individual, but it was necessary that he and God should be of one substance or essence. To be equal with God or at one with him in will and purpose was not enough. He must actually posses the very nature of God himself."[586] It is interesting to note here that Athanasius like all other Fathers insisted upon the ineffable, invisible nature of God the Father. To him God was not apprehensible to anybody in His affable nature but apprehensible only in his works and manifestation through Christ. He argued: "As, then, if a man should wish to see God, who is invisible by nature and not seen at all, he may know and apprehend him from his works, so let him who fails to see Christ with his understanding at least apprehend him by the works of his body, and test whether they be human works or God's works. And if they be human, let him scoff; but if they are not human, but of God, let him recognize it...let him marvel that by so ordinary a means things divine have been manifested to us, and that by death immortality has reached to all, and by the Word becoming man, the universal providence has been known, and its giver and artificer the very Word of God."[587]

This idea of Christ being the God and that in the Son we have the Father was not new or original with Athanasius. He was sincerely following the old long tradition of orthodoxy. Harnack rightly observes that "This fundamental thought is not new, and it corresponds with a very old conception of the Gospel. It is not new, for it was never wanting in the Church before the time of Athanasius. The Fourth Gospel, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Methodius, the so-called Modalists and even the Apologists and Origen- not to mention the Westerns - prove this; for the Apologists, and Origen too, in what they say of the Logos, emphasized not only His distinction from the Father, but also His unity with the Father."[588] Athanasius did differ, however, with Origen and Apologists in completely denying subordination, adoptionism, and any significant distinction between the Son and the Father. In doing so, he landed in Modalism and was accused of Sabellianism by the opponents. It is difficult to defend Athanasius of this accusation. If in the Son we have the proper, full Godhead, the true and proper nature and substance of God and Virgin Mary is the " Mother of God" then what else in the world would be more corporeal and anthropomorphic (Sabellianism) than this conception of deity. F. Young observes, that "On many occasions, Athanasius's exegesis is virtually docetic and seems to us forced and unnatural. All is subordinated to the purpose of showing that the Logos in himself had all the attributes of divinity, e.g. impassability, omniscience, etc. The texts implying weakness or ignorance he explains as merely referring to the incarnation-situation. At one point, Athanasius even goes so far as to say... he imitated our characteristics."[589] Norris observes: "Athanasius had to count for Jesus' ignorance by suggesting that for purposes of the incarnation the Logos restrained himself and did not exhibit his omniscience; he acted "as if" he were a human being. This in turn, however, seems- at least to the modern reader- to call into question the full reality of Jesus' humanity. Athanasius was certainly

not in the ordinary sense a Docetic. He did not question the reality of the flesh which Logos took. Even so, his position suggests that Jesus was less than a complete human being."[590] Young further argues that "Besides this, the weight of the evidence supports those who argue that Athanasius did not think that Christ had a human soul; he was Apollinarian before Apollinarius."[591] It was faith and salvation which led Athanasius to this point in asserting Christ's proper and complete divinity but he, as Harnack puts it, "in making use of these presuppositions in order to express his faith in the Godhead of Christ, *i.e.*, in the essential unity of the Godhead in itself with the Godhead manifested in Christ, fell into an abyss of contradictions."[592] It simply was, to use Harnack's term, "an absurdity". But, "Athanasius put up with absurdity; without knowing it he made a still greater sacrifice to his faith- the historical Christ. It was at such a price that he saved the religious conviction that Christianity is the religion of perfect fellowship with God, from being displaced by a doctrine which possessed many lofty qualities, but which had no understanding of the inner essence of religion, which sought in religion nothing but " instruction," and finally found satisfaction in an empty dialectic."[593]

Such a lengthy discussion of Athanasius' Christology is justified by the impact it had on the latter generations. The history of Christian dogma after him is the history of Athanasius' concept of faith in God-man, as Harnack observes that "Athanasius' importance to posterity consisted in this, that he defined Christian faith exclusively as faith in redemption through the God-man who was identical in nature with God, and that thereby he restored to it fixed boundaries and specific contents. Eastern Christendom has been able to add nothing up to the present day. Even in theory it has hit on no change, merely overloading the idea of Athanasius; but the Western Church also preserved this faith as fundamental. Following on the theology of the Apologists and Origen, it was the efficient means of preventing the complete Hellenising and secularization of Christianity."[594]

Regarding the question how influential Athanasius was in the Council of Nicea is difficult to determine. F. Young argues that "In fact it is hardly likely that a young deacon would have had any opportunity of contributing to the discussions of such a venerable collection of episcopal dignitaries, and even if he influenced his own bishop, Alexander's part in the proceedings does not appear to have been crucial; he was certainly not responsible for introducing the key Nicene formulation."[595] Whatever was the case, one may certainly conclude with Fisher that, "The conclusions reached were in full accord with his convictions, and he was afterwards the most renowned and effective expounder of them."[596]

In the Council the creed originally presented by Eusebius of Caesarea,[597] a supporter of Logos Christology and a foe of Sabellianism in every form, was accepted with certain additions. The will of the Emperor was the decisive factor and decided the matter.[598] Constantine was so influential that R. L. Fox could write that "Among his other innovations, it was Constantine who first mastered the art of holding, and corrupting, an international conference."[599] Kelly observes, that "the theology of the council, therefore, ...had a more limited objective than is sometimes supposed.... There is thus a sense in which it is unrealistic to speak of the theology of the council. While different groups might read their own theologies into the creed and its key-word, Constantine himself was willing to tolerate them all on condition that they acquiesced in his creed and tolerated each other."[600] On the other hand W. Bright argues, "The-Three Hundred, coming

together, could attest in combination the belief which they had severally inherited; and the doctrine which they promulgated in conformity with that belief would secure and enshrine the elements of Apostolic Christianity. So it was that, after a thoughtful survey of the subject, in harmony with the Churchly spirit, and in fidelity to transmitted belief and worship, the great Creed was written out, and doubtless read aloud in full Council, in the Emperor's presence, apparently by Hermogenes, afterwards bishop of Cappadocian Caesarea:"[601] Bright's account of the Council is very traditional. The situation was a lot more complex, political, personal, confused than thoughtful or theological as portrayed by Bright, though its theological impact upon posterity is undeniable. One is tempted to agree with Kelly who observes that "the status of the Nicene creed was very different in the generation or so following the council from what we many have been brought up to believe. One is perhaps tempted to sympathize with somewhat radical solution of the problem provided by that school of historians which treat the Nicene symbol as purely political formula representative of no strain of thought in the Church but imposed on the various wrangling groups as a badge of union."[602] Kelly further observes that "In the light of this we can understand that, when councils were held, it was not, in the early days in anyrate, the decisions of the ecumenical synod that were in question. It was taken for granted that they were there: occasionally an act of reverence was offered to them.... But since this was the light in which it was regarded, there was no occasion to be for ever appealing to its authority."[603]

Unfortunately, the later traditional Christianity did give a great deal of significance and authority to the Council's decisions and terms whose religious nature was far less imminent than its political fervor. The Nicene Creed begins: "We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Begotten of the Father, Only-begotten, *That is, from the Essence of the Father*, God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, Begotten, not made, *of one essence with the Father*; by whom all things, both in heaven and earth, were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down, and was incarnate, and became man, suffered, and rose again the third day; ascended into heavens; cometh to judge the quick and dead. And in the Holy Spirit."[604] Then it goes on to say, "But those who say, once He was not, and-before He was begotten, He was not, and- He came into existence out of what was not,' or- That the Son of God was a different "hypostasis" or "ousia" or-that He was made,' or-is (was) changeable or mutable are anathematized by the Catholic and Apostolic Church of God."[605]

The central phrase of this fundamental Christian confession, to Paul Tillich, is *homoousios* "of one substance with the Father." Though obviously a theological term, writes E. R. Hardy, "it was in a way layman's term for those who wanted to say undeniably that Christ is divine - something like the phrase of our modern Faith and Order Conference, "Jesus Christ as God and saviour," which is reasonably clear statement but not precisely the way a theologian would want to put things."[606] This decisive statement, observes Tillich, is "not in the scheme of emanation but in the scheme of Monarchianism. Consequently it was accused of being Sabellianism; and so were the main defenders, Athanasius and Marcellus."[607]Arians argued that such an analogy and identity was absolutely inappropriate in regard the relationship between God and the Logos. They forwarded three reasons to substantiate their position. "An essential property of God is that he is self-existent (unoriginated). God the Father cannot give this property to the Son since he is produced by the Father. Secondly, if the Father is unbegotten and unbegettable, then following Origen's principle,

the Son whom he begot must also be unbegotten and unbegettable, but this makes no sense at all. Finally, if the Son has all the same properties as the Father, he must likewise generate a Son, and that Son another and so on ad infinitum."[608] The answers given by Athanasius were self-contradictory. It made the Son both unbegotten and begotten, "unbegotten as part of the whole of Deity, begotten of the Father as a relationship inside the Trinity."[609] Harnack rightly argues that there is " in fact, no philosophy in existence possessed of formulae which could present in an intelligible shape the propositions of Athanasius."[610] The same can be argued about the subsequent Christian trinitarian thought at large.

All bishops subscribed with the exception of two; Theonas of Marmarika and Secundus of Ptolemais, alongside Arius. Arians were condemned and called "Porphyrians", their works ordered to be burned because, in the words of Julius of Rome, "For theirs was no ordinary offense, nor had they sinned against man, but against our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of the Living God."[611] The Emperor gave his final approval arguing, "what satisfied the three hundred bishops is nothing else than the judgment of God, but most of all where Holy Spirit being present in the thought of men such as these and so ripe in years, made known the Divine will."[612] A majority of modern traditional Christian scholars view these historical dogmatic developments as an illustration of "how the Holy Spirit brings about a gradual increase in the Church's actual consciousness of the mysteries revealed by Jesus Christ."[613]

A. Harnack, on the other hand, views them as an outcome of lack of understanding and education, "As regards the composition of the Council, the view expressed by the Macedonian Sabinus of Heraclea (Socr. 1. 8), that the majority of the bishops were uneducated, is confirmed by the astonishing results. The general acceptance of the resolution come to by the Council is intelligible only if we presuppose that the question in dispute was above most of the bishops."[614] Neil Buchanan, commenting on Harnack's statement, observes that " With the exception of the bishops whom their contemporaries and our earliest informants have mentioned by name, there do not seem to have been any capable men at the Council."[615]

Whatever was the composition of the Council, the impact it had and the high position its creed and confession enjoys in traditional Christianity is overwhelming. It is called "the greatest of all Synods" and is generally described with high remarks and lofty terms. "The Council of Nicaea is what it is to us quite apart from all doubtful or apocryphal traditions: it holds a pre-eminent place of honour, because it established for all ages of the Church that august and inestimable confession, which may be to unbelief, or to anti-dogmatic spirit, a mere stumbling block, a mere incubus, because it is looked at *ab extra*, in a temper which cannot sympathize with the faith which it enshrines, or the adoration which it stimulate; but to those who genuinely and definitely believe in the true divinity of the Redeemer, the doctrine of Nicaea, in the expanded form which Christendom has adopted, is prime treasure of their religious life, the expression of a faith coherent in itself, and capable of overcoming the world in the power of the Incarnation who is the "Co-essential," that is, as St. Athanasius was careful to explain it, the "real" Son of God."[616]

On the other hand, Fairbairn argues that "These gracious and sublime ideas were the aim rather than the achievement of the theology; they were more what it aspired to than what it reached." He further argues: "It is hard to say whether the Nicene theology did more eminent service or

disservice to the Christian conception of God. In contending for the Deity of the Son, it too much forgot to conceive the Deity through the Son and as the Son conceived Him. In its hands, and in consequence of its definitions and authority, the metaphysical Trinity tended to supersede the ethical Godhead. The Church, when it thought of the Father, thought more of the First Person in relation to the Second than of God in relation to man; when it thought of the Son, it thought more of the Second Person in relation to the First than of humanity in relation to God.... The Nicene theology failed here because it interpreted God and articulated its doctrine in the terms of the schools rather than in the terms of the consciousness of Christ."[618] He concludes observing that " The division of the Persons within Godhead had as its necessary result the division of God from man, and the exaltation of miraculous and unethical agencies as the means of bridging over the gulf. The inadequacy in these cardinal respects of the Nicene theology would be inexplicable were we to regard it as a creation of supernatural wisdom or the result of special Divine enlightenment; but it is altogether normal when conceived as a stage in the development of Christian thought."[619]

The Aftermath of the Nicene Council:

It is obvious that there is a clear doctrine of the "Trinity" incorporated in the Nicene Creed. There is only one indefinite statement in regards to the Holy Spirit. But the deity of Christ, (the central problem for our study of anthropomorphism in Christianity) was fully conserved and rendered immune to theological as well as philosophical criticism that had discredited Modalism.

All avenues leading to the Godhead of Christ, the Savior, and impulses leading to his exaltation to the highest possible place and worship as the God were given free play without convicting his worshippers of polytheism, obscurantism or anthropomorphism. On the other hand, as the Creed was carried in the Council by the pressure of Constantine against the inclinations of a great majority of bishops, it did not settled the dispute. It needed only a change of mind in Constantine himself (in 336) then his death in 337 to change the so-called Holy Spirit stamped exposition of the divine will and turn every thing upside down.[620] Jerome's words are not wholly exaggeration when he writes, "the whole world groaned in astonishment to find itself Arian."[621] It was once again the imperial power first in the figure of Valentinian (364) and then Theodosius (380) which came to the rescue of the Nicene Creed with some alterations and additions at the Council of Constantinople in 381.[622]

The Nicaeno- Constantinopolitan Creed goes: "We believe in one God Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, who was begotten of the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from True God, begotten not made, of one substance with the father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin, and was made man, and was crucified on our behalf under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge quick and dead, of whose kingdom there shall not be an end; and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the life-giver, who proceedeth from the Father, who with Father and Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets; in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for remission of sins; we accept a resurrection of the dead and

the life of age to come."[623] This Creed whose origination at the Council of Constantinople is questioned by F.J.A. Hort and A. Harnack[624] and established by scholars like Eduard Schwartz and Badcock and Kelly[625] was displaced everywhere throughout the East and the West in the sixth century under the name of Nicene Creed. The Creed represents more nearly the position of Cappadocians than that of the Athanasius. It represents the *homoiousionoi*, who accepted *homoiousios* (meaning "similar") but not *homoousios*. That is why it omits the words "from the same substance (*homoousios*) of the Father" which was the most important phrase to Athanasius.[626] Though more moderate than the earlier original Creed it aims at achieving the same goal: the proper divinity and deity of Jesus Christ hence conserving the results achieved at the Nicene Council.

It is pertinent here to mention the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great (330-379), Gregory of Nazianzuz (329-389) and Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa (329-394).[627] They are known for their Trinitarian formula. Though they agreed completely with Athanasius in attributing real and proper divinity to Christ by accepting him being from the same substance and nature as of the Father,[628] they disagreed with him in the question of persons. According to Athanasius, the "Father, Son and Spirit are the same being living in a threefold form, or in three relationships, as many may be at the same time a father, a son and a brother. According to Cappadocians, on the other hand, Father, Son and Spirit are three like or equal beings sharing in a common nature, as different men share in the common nature of man."[629] This is real Trinity.

This is what Basil describes when he discusses the matter at length: "Many, not distinguishing in theology the common substance from the hypostases, fall into the same fancies and imagine that it make no difference whether substance (*ousis*) or hypostasis be spoken of. Whence it has pleased some to admit without examination that if one substance then also one hypostasis should be affirmed. And on the other hand those who accept three hypostases think themselves compelled to confess an equal number of substances. I have therefore, that you may not fall into a similar error, written you a brief discourse concerning the matter. This then, to put it briefly, is the meaning of the word: Some nouns which are used to cover many and various objects have a more general sense like man.... When we imply this word we designate the common nature... not some particular man to whom the name especially belongs. For Peter is no more man than Andrew or John or James. Hence, as the word embraces all that are included under the same name, there is need of some mark of distinction by which we may recognize not man in general but Peter or John. There are other nouns which stand for a particular object and denote not the one nature but a separate thing having nothing in common, so far as its individuality goes, with others of the same kind, like Paul or Timothy....Thus when two or more are taken together, such as Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, and inquiry is made concerning their substance, we do not use one word for the substance of Paul, another for that of Silvanus, and other for that of Timothy....If then you transfer to theology the distinction you have drawn in human affairs between substance and hypostasis you will not go wrong."[630]

Gregory of Nazianzuz explained the formula by the following example: "What was Adam? A creature of God. What, then, was Eve? A fragment of the creature. And what was Seth? The begotten of both. Does it, then, seem to you that creature and fragment and begotten are the same being? Of course it does not. But were not these persons consubstantial? Of course they were.

Well, then, here it is an acknowledged fact that different persons may have the same substance."[631] He further argues that "For the Father is not Son, and yet this is not due to either deficiency or subjection of essence; but the very fact of being unbegotten or begotten, or proceeding, has given the name of Father to the first, of the Son to the second, and to the third, him of whom we are speaking, of the Holy Ghost, that the distinction of three persons may be preserved in the one nature and dignity of the Godhead. For neither is the Son Father, for the Father is one, but he is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit Son because he is of God, for the only-begotten is one, but he is what the Son is. The three are one in Godhead, and the one three in properties; so that neither is the unity a Sabellian one, nor does the Trinity countenance the present evil distinction."[632] In connection with the complete equality of the three persons Gregory of Nazianzuz writes: "To us there is one God, for the Godhead is one, and all that proceeds from his is referred to one, though we believe in three Persons. For one is not more and another less God; nor is one before and another after; nor are they divided in will or parted in power; nor can you find here any of the qualities of divisible things; but the Godhead is, to speak concisely, undivided in separate Persons; and there is one mingling of lights, as it were of three suns joined to each other. When, then, we look at the Godhead, or the first cause, or the monarchia, that which we conceive is one; but when we look at the Persons in whom the Godhead dwells, and at those who timelessly and with equal glory have their being from the first cause, there are three whom we worship."[633]

Gregory of Nyssa gives the example of gold observing that "there may be many golden staters, but gold is one, so we may be confronted with many who individually share in human nature, such as Peter, James, and John, yet the "man" [the human nature] in them is one."[634] There is a complete operational harmony between these three distinct Persons, "We do not learn that the Father does something on his own, in which the Son does not co-operate. Or again, that the Son acts on his own without the Spirit. Rather does every operation which extends from God to creation and is designated according to our differing conceptions of it have its origin in the Father, proceed through the Son, and reach its completion by the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that the word for the operation is not divided among the persons involved. For the action of each in any matter is not separate and individualized. But whatever occurs, whether in reference to God's providence for us or to the government and constitution of the universe, occurs through the three Persons, and is not three separate things."[635] He further argues that "The Father is God and the Son is God; and yet by the same affirmation God is one, because no distinction of nature or of operation is to be observed in the Godhead.... since the divine, single, and unchanging nature eschews all diversity of essence, in order to guard its unity, it admits of itself no plural significance."[636]

He distinguishes between Persons on the basis of causality, "the only way by which we distinguish one Person from the other, by believing, that is, that one is the cause and the other depends on the cause. Again, we recognize another distinction with rearguard to that which depends on the cause. There is that which depends on the first cause and that which is derived from what immediately depends on the first cause. Thus the attribute of being only-begotten without doubt remains with the Son, and we do not question that the Spirit is derived from the Father."[637] He concludes arguing that "The principle of causality distinguishes, then, the Persons of the holy Trinity. It affirms that the one is uncaused, while the other depends on the cause. But the divine nature is in every way understood to be without distinction or difference. For this reason we

rightly say there is one Godhead and one God, and express all the other attributes that befit the divine in the singular."[638] How the uncaused first cause and the caused or derived from the Father can be the same, equal in all properties and respects is a valid question not satisfactorily answered by any of the Cappadocians.

This Cappadocian analogy is one of the two chief types of analogy that has been used throughout the course of Christian history in reference to the Trinity. The Cappadocians begin with a consideration of three persons, as we have just seen, while Augustinian analogy emphasizes coequal Trinity by distinguishing the persons in terms of internal relations within a person (e.g., memory, will, and intelligence or love, the lover (*amans*) and the object loved (*quod amatur*).[639] Both of them are not satisfactory and have several flaws. The former, for instance, could lead to tritheism while the latter could lead to Sabellianism or Unitarianism. Francis Young rightly observes about Gregory of Nyssa's analogy that "No matter how much he protests their common eternity, common activity and common will, it is difficult to call a theology based on such a definition of their common nature, monotheistic."[640] Others like Harnack, F. Loofs, F. W. Green [641] have observed that this Cappadocian position was really a kind of Homoean view, or to use Harnack's words, " the community of substance in the sense of likeness (or equality) of substance, not in that of unity of substance."[642] To E. R. Hardy this observation is misleading and "far from fair". He argues that "*ousia* is not to be regarded merely as a universal, and *hypostasis* as a particular instance of it. That would surely lead to tritheism. The Cappadocian idea is far more subtle. The nature of the Godhead more nearly corresponds in their thought to Aristotle's idea of a particular, concrete existence (*proto ousia)*, not to the *deutera ousia* which members of a species have in common. The *ousia* in the Godhead is identical in each Person: the common humanity in men is only *generic*."[643]

Hardy's explanation is attractive but seems a little forced and artificial. The Cappadocians seem to have used the terms in their generic forms without much specifications. It will be too much to say that the Cappadocian Fathers intended tritheism but it seems quite fair to observe that their distinction between three Persons of the Trinity and their usage of the analogy of Peter, James, and John could easily lead to tritheism as it was observed even during their own life time. Our present understanding of the human person leaves very little room to doubt the validity of this objection. Undoubtedly to the Cappadocians, as to almost all Fathers, God is incomprehensible, ineffable, one and infinite. Gregory of Nazianzuz has made it clear by writing: "It is difficult to conceive God, but to define him in words is an impossibility, as one of the Greek teachers of divinity taught, not unskillfully, as it appears to me; with the intention that he might be thought to have apprehended him; in that he says it is hard thing to do; and may escape being convicted of ignorance because of his impossibility of giving expression to the apprehension. But in my opinion it is impossible to express him, and yet more impossible to conceive him....the darkness of this world and the thick covering of the flesh is an obstacle to the full understanding of the truth."[644] Gregory of Nyssa observed that "every concept relative to God is a simulcrum, a false likeness, an idol. The concepts we form in accordance with the understanding and the judgment which are natural to us, basing ourselves on an intelligible representation, create idols of God instead of revealing to us God Himself. There is only one name by which the divine nature can be expressed: the wonder which seizes the soul when it thinks of God."[645] In his ***Life of Moses*** he wrote "For God makes His dwelling there where our understanding and our concepts can gain no admittance.

Our spiritual ascent does but reveal to us, ever more and more clearly, the absolute incomprehensibility of he divine nature."[646] It is also true that Basil and others roundly denied any suffering by or human weakness in the Godhead itself.

On the other hand, it is equally true that the understanding of God the Cappadocians aspired and propagated by their writings did not and cannot remove them from a number of problems and confusions which have been found in almost all the orthodox Fathers, such as the relationship of Christ to God. Grillmeier rightly observes that "Whereas in trinitarian doctrine...they clearly recognized that unity and distinction in the Godhead are to be sought through different approaches, they only dimly grasped a corresponding insight into christology."[647] He further argues that "The Cappadocians have seen something, but neither their path nor their goal is stated clearly. As a result, the solution of christological problems is made much more difficult, as will be evident in the case of Nestorius."[648]

Gregory of Nazianzuz in opposition to Gregory of Nyssa takes over Origen's notion of the soul as mediator between Godhead and flesh. He clearly uses the orthodox problematic terminology and also declares Christ's divine nature as dominant over his inferior human nature. "And that (the cause of his birth) was that you might be saved who insult him and despise his Godhead, because of this, that he took upon him your denser nature... having conjunction with the flesh by means of the mind. While his inferior nature, the humanity, became God because it was conjoined with God and became one (with him). In this the stronger part (sc. the Godhead) prevailed in order that I too might be made God so far as he is made man."[649] So if his human nature became God, then any claim of denial of suffering and weaknesses in Godhead loses ground from beneath it. It faces the same problems which have been faced by the solutions of Fathers before them.

Gregory of Nyssa takes the same route when he writes: "Yet we have no doubt, from the recorded miracles, that God underwent birth in human nature, but how this happened we decline to investigate as a matter beyond the scope of reason."[650] He further writes: "Our faith falters when we think that God, the infinite, incomprehensible, ineffable reality, transcending all glory and majesty, should be defiled by associating with human nature, and his sublime powers no less debased by their contact with what is abject. We are not at a loss to find fitting answer even to this objection. Do you ask the reason why God was born among men? If you exclude from life the benefits which come from God, you will have no way of recognizing the divine.... Our nature was sick and needed a doctor. Man had fallen and needed someone to raise him up. He who had lost life needed someone to restore it.... Were these trifling and unworthy reasons to impel God to come down and visit human nature, seeing humanity was in such a pitiful and wretched state.?"[651] Therefore the Logos mingled with manhood in Christ to raise it to his own exalted status and to transform it into pure and divine nature. Grillmeier observes that Gregory's "famous simile of the absorption of the flesh in the Godhead `like a drop of vinegar in the sea' is extremely bold theological language."[652] How it happened is a mystery incomprehensible to human reason. F. Young observes that "For all the detail of his trinitarian discussions, Gregory stands ultimately before a mystery, and this is where his dogmatic theology and his so-called mysticism coalesce."[653]

Though the Cappadocian's Trinitarian formula of the divinity being of one essence, one nature in three forms, persons (*personae)*, three independent realities, is called "the scientific" formula,[654] it

did not provide any intelligible solution to the problem it was formulated to solve, i.e. the historical Jesus and his relationship with God. The words used to distinguish the persons in the eternal trinity are, as observes Tillich, "empty." "And what do such words mean? They are words without content, because there is no perception of any kind which can confirm their meaning. To anticipate a bit, Augustine said these differences are not expressed because something is said by them, but in order not to remain silent. This means that if the motives for the doctrine of the trinity are forgotten, the formulae become empty."[655] It may not lead to Docetism, Sabelllianism, or Modalism of Athanasius, but it could lead to tritheism, which, in the case of the historical Christ, would also be a naive anthropomorphism.

By now it becomes clear that the above discussed orthodox Fathers insisted upon the true, perfect, full divinity and Godhead of Jesus Christ. They aspired to maintain two mutually contradictory principles i.e., the transcendence and ineffability of God in the figure of God the Father, and full incarnation of God in the human figure of Christ. All the given explanations, whether as modes, or persons, or any other interpretation certainly lead to corporealism and anthropomorphism. It is impossible to maintain the full incarnation of God in a human being who lived a true, historical and full human life and aspire to avoid or deny charges of corporealism and anthropomorphism. That becomes even more evident when we turn to the discussions about the will and nature of the person of Jesus Christ which were at the center of later controversies.

The Person of Jesus Christ:

It has always been Christians' desire for redemption that had ultimately led them to proclaim the deity of Jesus Christ. From earlier Fathers to the Council of Constantinople there had been a common thread weaving them together, a common concern that was to safeguard the proper deity of Christ alongwith the transcendence of God. There always remained the question of Christ's humanity. It was impossible to deny his humanity as, according to the Gospels, he has been a historical reality. But how to interpret the relationship between his divine and human nature? "The difficulty of thinking of Christ", writes McGiffert, "as both divine and human had always been recognized and had led to docetism on one side and adoptionism on the other. The acceptance of the real deity of Christ made the problem all the more insistent."[656] The Fathers before the fourth century were not conscious of this problem. Now, after the settlement of the dogma of Christ's divinity at the Nicene Council, the problem became more acute and drew more attention. "A few decades after Nicea", says Elert, "the theme of the formation of dogma shifted completely....Now the theme is not the pre-existent Son of God, but the incarnate one. Not the relation of God to God is now at issue, but the relation of God to man in the person of the earthly Christ who dwelt among men."[657]

It was Apollinarius (d. 390), bishop of Laodicea and a close friend of Athanasius, who proposed a somewhat rational solution to this complex problem. Apollinarianism, observes Kelly, "was in fact the most subtle and thoroughgoing attempt to work out a theory of Christ's Person in the fourth century, and carried tendencies long accepted in the Alexandrian school to their logical limit."[658] As said earlier, according to Athanasius and in the Nicene Creed, the proper divinity was safeguarded to ensure redemption. It was strongly held that only the true Son of God could reveal God to man. Apollinarius, following this Word-flesh Christology, argued that this act of

redemption would not be possible without the deification of the man Jesus Christ. Therefore, he contended that Jesus has only one theanthropic or divine-human nature as at incarnation the Logos, a divine spirit or mind, was combined and united with the human body and soul and since then became the active personal element in Jesus while relegating the human element comprised of the body and soul to the secondary level or passive level. The frankly acknowledged presupposition of this argument, observes Kelly, "is that the divine Word was substituted for the normal human psychology in Christ."[659] He believed that if the divine is separated from the human in the Christ, the salvation would be imperiled. "He could not redeem us from our sins, revivify us, or raise us from the dead. How could we worship Him, or be baptized into His death, if He was only an ordinary man indwelt by the Godhead? "[660] In his confession he summarized this theme, "We declare that the Logos of God became man for the purpose of our salvation, so that we might receive the likeness of the heavenly One and be made God after the likeness of the true Son of God according to nature and the Son of man according to flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ."[661] In this process of complete fusion or union the human, the historical Jesus and his humanity was " swallowed up into the divinity", [662] and was completely transformed by the divine Logos. He used to delight in speaking of Christ as "God incarnate", "flesh-bearing God", or "God born of a woman". He concluded saying "One and the same is the body and the God, of whom it is the body, not that the flesh has been changed into that which is incorporeal, but that it has a property which is from us..., in accordance with the generation from the Virgin, and that which is above us..., in accordance with the mixture or union with God the Logos."[663] He affirmed that Christ's flesh was "divine flesh" or "the flesh of God" and was proper object of worship. It was a virtually a clear docetic tendency implying that Christ was not a real man but only appeared as a man.

It means that Christ in his incarnation retained his divine soul, nature or ousia and did not adopt a human rational soul or nature. It is because of this denial of a human rational soul in Christ, says H. A. Wolfson, that "Apollinaris, in departure from the orthodox Fathers, denied the existence in Jesus not only of two persons but also of two natures, maintaining that there was in him only one nature or ousia and that Jesus was "one incarnate nature of God the Logos...."[664] But Kelly recognizes that "The brilliance and thoroughgoing logic of Apollinarius' synthesis are undeniable."[665]

The "Monophysitism" as it was later called, was another expression of Monarchianism. Pelikan observes that "Apollinaris was expressing a common opinion when he spoke of "innumerable teachings supplied everywhere throughout the divine Scripture, all of them together bearing witness to the apostolic and ecclesiastical faith."[666] In Harnack's words, Apollinarius "merely completed the work of Athanasius inasmuch he added to it the Chriostology which was demanded by the Homousia of the Logos. They both made a supreme sacrifice to their faith in that they took from the complicated and contradictory tradition regarding Christ those elements only which were in harmony with the belief that He was the Redeemer from sin and death."[667] But it was widely felt that Apollinarius had safeguarded the divinity of Jesus on account of his humanity. The Cappadocian Fathers, the two Gregories and other churchmen opposed him by criticizing that his Christology failed to meet the essential condition of salvation and atonement, i.e. the unity of human rational soul, the seat of sin, with Logos. In his famous phrase Gregory Nazianzen argued that "What has not been assumed cannot be restored; it is what is united with God that is

saved."[668] Apollinarius was condemned as heretical at the second council of Constantinople in 381.

On the other hand, the representatives of the Antiochian school challenged 'Monophysitism' or Apollinarianism with their scientific Christological dogma.[669] In general, the Antiochian's interest in Jesus was more ethical than redemptive. They viewed in him a perfect ethical and moral example. It could have not been possible had he not been a complete human being with free will and genuine human personality. Antiochian school, argues Kelly, "deserves credit for bringing back the historical Jesus."[670] Diodorus of Tarsus and then Theodore of Mopsuestia, like Paul of Samosata, advocated a moral union 'unity of grace and will' rather than unity of substance and nature. Their Christology conformed to the "Word-man" scheme rather than the Alexandrian "Word-flesh" scheme.

Theodore emphasized the perfect humanity of Christ: "A complete man, in his nature, is Christ, consisting of a rational soul and human flesh; complete is the human person; complete also the person of the divinity in him. it is wrong to call one of them impersonal."[671] Opposing Monophysitism, he argued: "One should not say that the Logos became flesh" but one should say " He took on humanity."[672] To conform his views with the Logos Christology and Nicene doctrine of Christ's proper divinity, he had no choice but to assert in the Christ two natures: one of a complete human, the other complete divine, each with a full personality and all qualities and faculties that go therewith. None of these persons or natures mixed with the other: "The Logos dwelt in man but did not become man; the human was associated and united with the divine but was not deified."[673] There association and closeness was essential for the salvation but not so closely to render it irrelevant to man as man or to involve the unchangeable, immutable Logos in the suffering of the cross. In Theodore's formula, "the Godhead was separated from the one who was suffering in the trial of death, because it was impossible for him to taste the trial of death if [the Godhead] were not cautiously remote from him, but also near enough to do the needful and necessary things for the [human] nature that was assumed by it."[674] He further argued that while the scriptures distinguishes the natures, it at the same time stresses the unity between them. Therefore, he argued, "we point to difference of natures, but to unity of Person" or in other words "the two natures are, through their connection, apprehended to be one reality."[675]

As we see, Theodore emphatically denies the transformation or transmutation of the Logos into flesh. He also held that the divine nature did not change the human nature. Jesus, having human nature, by grace and free will could follow the divine nature. Therefore, one could say that Mary gave birth to God.

Theodore's opponents opposed this theory as leading to a "monster with two heads", a being with two personal centers and a combination of two sons.[676] Theodore denied this as mere accusation but, to McGiffert, "to all intents and purpose he was doing so."[677] Cyril of Alexandria singled him out for attack and since the Fifth General Council of Constantinople in 533 he has been labeled as a Nestorian before Nestorius. Modern scholarship vindicates him of this accusation as Kelly observes: "In modern times, especially since the rediscovery of the relatively innocuous *Catechetical Homilies,* there has been a decided reaction against this verdict. It has been emphasized, for example, that he was deeply concerned, so far as his categories of thought

allowed, to establish the oneness of subject in the God-man....He can write, for example, `Thus there results neither any confusion of the natures nor any untenable division of the Person; for our account of the natures must remain unfocused, and the Person must be recognized as indivisible'; and again, `We display a distinction of natures, but unity of Person'. For these and similar reasons the traditional estimate has been replaced by a more appreciative one which views him primarily as a theologian who championed the reality of the Lord's manhood against Apollinarianism and strove to do justice to His human experience."[678] F. Young observes that "If Theodore stresses the duality, it is because for him the unity is obvious."[679]

Controversy came to a head in the fifth century when Nestorius, a younger member of the Antiochian school, became bishop of Constantinople (428 A.D.). He protested against the tendency very common among the masses, especially among the monks in the neighborhood of the capital, to exalt the Virgin Mary as "Mother of God" or "*theotokos*". "God cannot have a mother, he argued, and no creature could have engendered the Godhead; Mary bore a man, the vehicle of divinity but not God. The Godhead cannot have been carried for nine months in a woman's womb, or have been wrapped in baby-clothes, or have suffered, died and been buried."[680] H. Chadwick observes that "Nothing caused so much scandal as a remark of Nestorius that 'God is not a baby two or three months old.' "[681] Nestorius held that she should either be called 'mother of the man Jesus' or 'mother of Christ'. His objection was to the transference of human attributes to the divine Logos. He emphatically denied that the Logos participated in the sufferings of the human nature of Christ.[682]

He believed that Jesus had two natures. He maintained that before the union of the man and the Logos in Jesus, the man was a person distinct from Logos. Then "He who is the similitude of God has taken the person of the flesh."[683] After the union these two separate persons retained their identity "There the person exist not without ousia, nor here again does the ousia exist without the person, nor also the nature without person, nor yet the person without ousia."[684] His watchword was that "I hold the natures apart, but unite the worship".[685] He, following Theodore of Mopsuestia who held that "When we distinguish the natures, we say that the nature of the Divine Logos is complete that His person also is complete...[likewise we say] that man's nature is complete and his person also is complete. But when we consider the union, we say there is one person only",[686] argued that after incarnation there resulted a new person, namely the person of Jesus, of which the Logos and man were two component parts. He believed that for true redemption, the second Adam must have been a real man. Kelly observes that "It was all-important in his eyes that the impassability of 'the God' should be preserved, and that `the man' for his part should retain his spontaneity and freedom of action. Hence, though speaking on occasion of a `union'..., the term he preferred was `conjunction'..., which seem to avoid all suspicion of a confusion or mixing of the natures."[687] To Nestorius it was a "perfect", "exact" and "continuous" union. Unlike the Alexandrian Christological view that upheld "hypostatic or natural" union, his view of union was "voluntary". By this he meant "the drawing together of the divine and human by gracious condescension on the one hand, and love and obedience on the other. As a result of their mutual adhesion, Christ was a single being, with a single will and intelligence, inseparable and indivisible."[688] Addressing Cyril of Alexandria he said, "I said and affirmed that the union is in the one person of the Messiah... but thou [actest] in the reverse way, because thou wishest that in the two natures God the Word should be the person of the union."[689]

It is, observes Wolfson, "because of this conception of Jesus as being one person composed of the person of the Logos and the person of the man in him that at the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (533) the Nestorians are anathematized on the ground that they "name the man separately Christ and Son, and so clearly speak of two persons, and hypocritically speak of one person and of one Christ only according to designation and honor and dignity and worship."[690] Cyril in his letter of 430, which was used as one of the sources in the Council, had already written 12 anathemas which were specifically pointed towards Nestorius. Cyril wrote: "(1) If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore the holy Virgin is *theotokos-* for she bore in the flesh the Word of God became flesh- let him be anathema. (2) If anyone does not confess that the Word of God the Father was united by hypostases to the flesh and is one Christ with his own flesh, that is, the same both God and man together, let him be anathema. (3) If any one divides the hypostases in the one Christ after his union, joining them only by conjunction in dignity, or authority or power, and not rather by coming together in a union by nature, let him be anathema."[691]

Cyril on the other hand, as Fisher observes, "asserted a physical (or metaphysical) uniting of the two natures. God becomes man. After the incarnation, there are two natures abstractly considered, but in the concrete reality but one,- namely, the one incarnated nature of the divine Logos."[692] He contended in his letter to Nestorius that "So confessing the Word united hypostatically to flesh, we worship one Son and Lord Jesus Christ, neither putting apart and dividing man and God, as joined with each other by a union of dignity and authority-for this would be an empty phrase and no more-nor speaking of the Word of God separately as Christ, but knowing only one Christ, the Word of God the Father with his own flesh."[693] His formula, "out of two natures, one" led to a theanthropic person, not just God, nor just man, but throughout both in them. In the literal sense "the Logos has assumed humanity. Hence, it can be said that 'God is born', that 'God suffered', if only it be added, 'according to the flesh'.[694] He also insisted that "Since the holy Virgin gave birth after the flesh to God who was united by *hypostasis* with flesh, therefore we say that she is *theotokos...*"[695] H.V. Campenhausen observes, that "From his theological point of view this was not only quite consistent but it thereby secured for him the wide support of the masses. From historical standpoint the victory which he was to gain over Nestorius must be regarded as the first great triumph of the popular worship of Mary."[696] He further argues that "In the light of later dogmatic formulations his Christology was quite inaccurate and Monophysite. But Cyril never doubted that belief in Christ could be rightly professed and defended only in the way to which he was accustomed. He abhorred all "tolerant" dilutions and discussions of the truth, and where he had power he was always ready to use it mercilessly to suppress all opposition to his spiritual dominion."[697]

Cyril, in view of Campenhausen, "was not greatly concerned with the truth; outwardly, however, he continued to play the part of the anxious, thoughtful leader who refuses to take action for reasons of purely personal spite, leaving the first steps to his best friends and go-between."[698] It was due to Cyril's efforts and political genius[699] that Nestorius was made guilty of heresy and deposed in the general Council of Ephesus (431) but the final settlement was reached at the Council of Chalcedon.

The views about the person of Jesus which were held by Theodore and were at bottom not much different from the orthodox Fathers caused Nestorius the stigma of heresy. Some modern scholars like J. F. Bathune-Baker, F. Loofs and M. V. Anastos[700] have tried to rehabilitate Nestorius' orthodoxy. Anastos, for instance, observes, "If Nestorius and Cyril could have been compelled to discuss their differences calmly and to define their terms with precision, under the supervision of a strict and impartial arbiter who could have kept them under control until they had explained themselves clearly, there is little doubt that they would have found themselves in substantial agreement theologically, though separated *toto caelo* as far as their respective archiepiscopal sees was concerned."[701] Kelly observes that "When we try to assess the character of Nestorius's teaching, one thing which is absolutely clear is that he was not a Nestorian in the classic sense of the word."[702] Grillmeier observes that "we can recognize just as clearly that he need not have been condemned had attention been paid to his care for tradition and to the new problem which he posed, despite his speculative `impotence' (G. L. Prestige) to solve it."[703] F. Young writes: "Nestorius was the victim. He has become the symbol of one type of christological position taken to extremes. And for that he suffered. He could legitimately complain that his condemnation had been unfair: Cyril had plotted his downfall; Cyril chaired the synod; Cyril was his accuser and his judge; Cyril represented Pope and Emperor. Cyril was everything! Nestorius had no chance of a hearing. There can be few who would defend the proceedings at Ephesus."[704] P. Tillich observes, that "If we say that Nestorius became a heretic, we could say that he was the most innocent of all heretics. Actually he was a victim of the struggle between Byzantium and Alexandria."[705]

When looked from the perspective of our topic, it becomes evident that traditional Christianity, for the sake of salvation and redemption, has always intended to crucify God and denied all efforts to make just the human person suffer. This is crystal clear corporealism and could have not been maintained just by speculative theology or any logical effort. It needed the exploitive and political power to suppress all rational and curious inquiries into it and that had been made available to several of the propounders of Logos theology in its traditional sense. This act of blaspheming God, to use Nestorius' term, could have not been done by the Holy Spirit as always claimed but by the political powers of secular and at times pagan emperors.

In conclusion it is worth quoting the famous passage from Nestorius, who wrote: "It is my earnest desire that even by anathematizing me they may escape from blaspheming God [and that those who so escape may confess God, holy, almighty and immortal, and not change the image of the incorruptible God for the image of corruptible man, and mingle heathenism with Christianity... but that Christ may be confessed to be in truth and in nature God and Man, being by nature immortal and impassable as God, and mortal and passable by nature as Man- not God in both natures, nor again Man in both natures. The goal of my earnest wish is that God may be blessed on earth as in heaven]; but for Nestorius, let him be anathema; only let men speak of God as I pray for them that they may speak. For I am with those who are for God, and not with those who are against God, who with an outward show of religion reproach God and cause him to cease from being God."[706] F. Young pays Nestorius homage in the following words: "It was a great Christian who wrote those words. There have been many who were prepared to die as martyrs for what they believed to be the truth, but Nestorius was prepared to live cursed and consigned to oblivion, as long as

God was not dishonored... In tribulation he showed a greater generosity of spirit than many who have received the name saint rather than heretic."[707]

The Council of Chalcedon:

The decisions of the general Council of Ephesus did not settle the issue of the person of Christ. Just fifteen years after the agreement patched up in 433, the quarrel broke out again in 448 when Eutyches, Archimandrite of a monastery in the neighborhood of Constantinople, vehemently opposed Nestorianism or Antiochian party's "inspired man" Christology in favor of Cyrillianism or Alexandrian God-man Christology. Kelly observes that "What Eutyches's actual doctrine was has never been easy to determine. At a preliminary examination, before the envoys of the synod, he declared that `after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ I worship one nature, viz. that of God made flesh and become man'. He vigorously repudiated the suggestion of two natures in the Incarnate as un-Scriptural and contrary to the teaching of the fathers. Yet he expressly allowed that He was born from the Virgin and was at once perfect God and perfect man. He denied ever having said that His flesh came from heaven, but refused to concede that it was consubstantial with us."[708] Flavian, the successor of Proclus, condemned him as Apollinarian. Kelly observes that Eutyches was neither a Docetist nor Apollinarian. He was "a confused and unskilled thinker...blindly rushing forward to defend the unity of Christ against all attempts to divide Him."[709] He actually upset the required balance in connection with Christology. R.V. Sellers argues that "if we are to understand Eutyches aright, we must not think of him as the instructed theologian, prepared to discuss the doctrine of the Incarnation. Rather does he appear as the simple monk who, having renounced the world, had also renounced all theological inquiry, and considered that it behoved him obediently to follow what had been said by the orthodox Fathers, since these were the experts in matters concerning the faith."[710]

Eutyches however, appealed his condemnation. Dioscorus of Alexandria accused Flavian of requiring a test of orthodoxy other than the Nicene creed. The Emperor Theodosius II summoned a council to meet at Ephesus in August of 449 to decide the matter. Pope Leo of Rome declined to participate in person but dispatched on June 13, 449 his famous Dogmatic Letter, or *Tome*, to Flavian, and clearly condemned the `One Nature after the Union' doctrine of Eutyches. Leo said in his letter that the properties of each nature and substance were combined together to form one person, "the distinctness of both natures and substance is preserved, and both meet in one Person..."[711] He wrote that "when Eutyches, on being questioned in our examination of him, answered, "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union I confess one nature," I am astonished that so absurd and perverse a profession as this of his was not rebuked by a censure on the part of any of his judges, and that an utterance extremely foolish and extremely blasphemous was passed over...."[712] He also directly attacked the reluctance Eutyches had shown in accepting Christ's consubstatiality with us. He wrote: "And he should have not spoken idly to the effect that the Word was in such a sense made flesh, that the Christ who was brought forth from the Virgin's womb had the form of a man, but had not a body really derived from his mother's body."[713] He further argued that "no doubt that he whom he recognizes as having been capable of suffering is also man with a body like ours; since to deny his true flesh is also to deny his bodily sufferings."[714] This letter was carefully phrased to shun Nestorianism on the one hand and Eutychianism on the other. But Nestorius, writes Chadwick, "reading the Tome in

his lonely exile, felt that the truth had been vindicated at last, and that he could die in peace."[715] Leo's Tome was never read to the synod. Under imperial power Eutyches was immediately rehabilitated and his orthodoxy vindicated. The confession of two natures was anathematized. The letter of Leo, which was suppressed in this so called "Robber Synod" or "Latrocinium" (Brigandage) of Ephesus, was approved at Chalcedon. In fact the letter became decisive for the outcome at Chalcedon. The opportunity for that was provided by the death of Theodosius on July 28, 450. Marcian succeeded to the throne and cemented his position by marrying the late emperor's sister Plucheria. Marcian and Plucheria both were sympathizers of the Two Nature doctrine. The Pope persuaded them to summon the council to annul the theological work of the Robber Synod. Originally planned for Nicaea, the council was transferred to Chalcedon. The proceedings opened on October 8, 451.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council, which was actually the most largely attended synod of antiquity, solemnly approved the Nicene Creed as the standard of orthodoxy, canonized Cyril's two letters and Leo's Tome and finally, under the imperial pressure,[716] approved the following formula:

"Following the Holy Fathers we all with one consent teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in deity and perfect in humanity, God truly and man truly, of a reasonable soul and body, of one substance with the Father in his deity, and of one substance with us in his humanity, in all things like unto us without sin; begotten before the ages of the Father in his deity, in the last days for us and for our salvation born of Mary the Virgin, the mother God, in his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of the natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one hypostasis, not divided or separated into two persons but one and the same Son and only begotten God Logos, Lord Jesus Christ; as from the beginning the prophets and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us concerning him, and the creed of the Fathers handed down to us."[717]

By this formula the Council asserted against Nestorianism the unipersonality of Christ and asserted against Eutychianism Christ's possession of two natures, divine and human, each perfect and unchanged. As mentioned earlier, the victory was political rather than theological. Grillmeier observes that "It was only under constant pressure from the emperor Marcian that the Fathers of Chalcedon agreed to draw up a new formula of belief."[718] Kelly observes that "the imperial commissioners, in their desire to avoid a split, had to exert considerable pressure before agreement could be reached."[719] W. A. Wigram writes that the Council "failed to command respect, because it was imposed for political reasons, by a government that, as was too often the case, was making a fetish of uniformity. The verdict was, and was felt to be, a "government job," and not a free decision of the fathers of the Church. Had Theodosius lived longer, the Council would not have been held at all, and its decision was given, as things were, largely through the votes of Bishops who had gone with Dioscurus at Ephesus, and who shifted round readily to the opposite side, as soon as it was clear what line the Emperor was going to take."[720] He further observes that "in large districts, the Council was rejected at once, and in none, save only in Rome, was there any enthusiasm for its doctrine. For more than century, however, the antagonism felt for it was admitted to be that of a party in the Church, and not that of a separatist body. The word

"heretic" was not applied to those who rejected Chalcedon, even by the Bishops who persecuted them. They were called "Distinguisher," or one may say "Nonconformists."[721]

The critics of Chalcedon like Timothy (surnamed Aelurus, 477) and Philoxenus, on the other hand, honestly believed that "in their ignorance the so-called Fathers who had assembled to define the faith `had ordained nothing other than that the impure doctrines of Nestorius should be received and preached in all the Churches of God.'"[722] To them the Council "so separates, and personalizes, what is divine and what is human in Christ that the hypostatic union is dissolved, and its place taken by a mere conjunction of the divine Logos and a Man."[723] Likening themselves to the tribe of Judah they parted company with the orthodoxy. "For how could they, who alone were worthy of the title `orthodox', offer obedience to a Council which had caused Israel to sin? Nay, a curse lay upon that Council, and upon all who agreed with it, for ever."[724] Therefore, with the passage of time the old theological controversies surfaced again and again. Monophysites once again asserted their old claim of Jesus having one nature and one theanthropic will or monothelitism. Orthodoxy opposed this trend and in 680 at the third council of Constantinople (the sixth ecumenical council) were able to get their doctrine of 'dyothelitism' approved. By this doctrine the idea that Christ had two wills, a divine and a human, was officialized and has remained orthodox ever since both in the East and West.[725]

At Chalcedon and later at Constantinople the human side of the picture of Christ was saved. Grillmeier argues that "If the person of Christ is the highest mode of conjunction between God and man, God and the world, the Chalcedonian 'without confusion' and 'without separation' show the right mean between monism and dualism, the two extremes between which the history of christology also swings. The Chalcedonian unity of person in the distinction of the natures provides the dogmatic basis for the preservation of the divine transcendence, which must always be a feature of the Christian concept of God. But it also shows possibility of a complete immanence of God in our history, an immanence on which the biblical doctrine of the economy of salvation rests."[726] Sellers hails the Council with the following words: "in the Chalcedonian definition of her faith concerning the Person of her Lord, the Church possesses a treasure of inestimable worth-the work of an age which deliberately embarked on the task of attempting to offer an answer to the Christological problem-which she can hand down to succeeding generations of believers, as they themselves are confronted with the same problem. The form of the doctrine may vary as new thought-forms arise, but the content will remain. For, express it as we may, fundamental to the Christian faith is the confession that Jesus Christ is no mere man, but God himself living a human life, and sharing its experiences as the Saviour of the world; and, once this is accepted, there comes, itself the result of Christological inquiry, the affirmation that in his one Person are to be seen in closest union both Godhead in its supreme act of condescension and manhood in the height of its perfection."[727] Commenting on the significance of Chalcedon Paul Tillich observes, "To understand the steps in the christological doctrine, always keep in mind two pictures: (1) The being with two heads, God and man, where there is no unity; (2) The being in which one head has disappeared, but also humanity has disappeared. The one remaining head is the head of the Logos, of God himself, so that when Jesus acts, it is not the unity of something divine and something human, but it is the Logos who is acting. Thus all the struggles, all the uncertainties, the despair and loneliness, which the Gospels present, were only seemingly experienced by Jesus, but not really. They are inconsequential. This was the danger in the Eastern

Development. The fact that this danger was overcome is due to the decision of Chalcedon."[728] The figure of two heads with unity is again as strange as both the others mentioned by Tillich. It is more unintelligible and exposed to more subtle questions and curiosities. It is impossible to logically determine the demarcation line between God and Man while insisting upon their unity, as the traditional dogma asserts. It is corporeal and anthropomorphic.

This concept of being with two heads or natures has remained the official doctrine of Christian orthodoxy to the present times. E. Brunner writes: "The Jesus Christ shown to us in the Scriptures accredits Himself to us as the God-Man. One who meets Him with that openness to truth which the Bible calls "faith", meets in Him One who, in the unity of His Person, is both true God and true Man. It would be good for the Church to be content with this, and not wish to know more than they can know, or more than we need, if we are to trust Him and obey Him as we should."[729]

It is pertinent to mention that the Council of Chalcedon was a kind of victory of Antiochene theology over the Alexandrian Logos theology. Although it addressed the old unresolved issue, and finally, drew a line between God the Son and Jesus the human by emphasizing Christ's humanity, in reality it could not resolve the issue at all. Jesus, the historical human being, was declared to have two distinct natures, perfect human and perfect divine, but one theanthropic person the Logos, the Son of God. Moreover he was unlike human beings because of his sinlessness. Brunner rightly expresses the implications:, "when we agree with the verdict "He is a man like ourselves ", we are also obliged to come to the exactly opposite view and say: He is *not* a man like ourselves....We know of no other man in whose life sin plays no part, whose life is pure and unstained, reflecting the holy love of God; who therefore, without hypocrisy or self-assertion could come forth to meet man as One coming from God."[730]

Furthermore, the doctrine of one Person and two natures as is understood in the traditional circles, in reality, leads us to the old Alexandrian Cyrillian Christology and does not help much to understand the humanity of Christ. What Dr. Mascall says about the person or human knowledge of Christ would suffice to elaborate the point. He argues, "In Christ, however, the person is really distinct from the human nature; the nature with which the Person is really identical is not the human but the divine, and in this it shares in the omniscience which is the inalienable possession of Godhead. Is it therefore unreasonable to suppose that the contents of Christ's human mind will include not only that experimental knowledge which is acquired by him in the course of his development from infancy to manhood in a way substantially the same as, though immeasurably more consistent and unimpeded than, the way in which we acquire ours, but also an infused knowledge which is directly communicated to his human nature from the divine Person who is its subject, and which is a participation in the divine omniscience and is limited only by the receptive capacity of human nature as such?"[731]

Now, if the person of Christ consists of two natures, two wills, and in reality identical with the divine nature and knowledge rather than the human nature, then, one is fully justified to inquire with Maurice Wiles as to how genuine is that humanity and "How genuinely human is so qualified a human will?"[732] Moreover, this doctrine of the absolute unity of the person and two natures faces a number of other crucial challenges. The narration of Jesus praying to God, calling upon

him with the words such as "My God, My God" etc. would make no sense even if one accepts that it was Jesus' human nature that was engaged in such acts of prayer. Was the Person of Jesus calling the Person of Christ? But there is only One Person in Jesus the Christ who, according to the doctrine, is God also. Moreover, such a union of the person and wills will definitely make the Godhead suffer the agonies of crucifiction. On the other hand, if it be asserted that it was Christ's human person or nature going through pains and suffering on the Cross, then how in the world can salvation, redemption, and atonement be achieved, for which the whole myth had been brought into existence?

The world has yet to see a theologian or a philosopher who can resolve these contradictions and explain in intelligible terms the Chalcedonian doctrine of Christ's person. Brunner contends that "The aim of this doctrine is not that it may solve the mystery of Jesus. We know that when we confess Him as God-Man, and must so confess Him, we are saying something which goes far beyond anything we can understand."[733] W. Bright, after strongly defending the outcome of the Council of Chalcedon, finally could not escape saying, "After all, if Christ is believed in as One, yet as both truly God and truly Man-however little we can comprehend the relation thus created-that belief is all that the Chalcedonian terminology implies: to hold it is to be at one with the Fourth Council."[734] J.S. Whale reaches the same conclusion by observing, "Of course, an explanation of Christ's person must always be beyond our reach if by `explain' we mean `put into a class'. Jesus is inexplicable just because he cannot be put into a class. His uniqueness constitutes the problem to be explained. It is impossible to describe him without becoming entangled in paradoxes. The great merit of Creeds is that they left the paradox as such."[735]

It is unfortunate to believe in logical impossibilities and contradictions in the name of paradox. Faith can be substantiated by the facts, it cannot create facts. We conclude here with the remarks of McGiffert who observes "The problem is metaphysical and purely speculative. Except by those interested to trace the formation of the particular dogmas involved, the whole Trinitarian and Christological development might be dismissed as unworthy of notice were it not for the profound religious difference that underlay it...."[736]

Contemporary Christian Standpoint:

Throughout the history of Christian dogma, wrestling between various concepts and pictures of Jesus has never ceased to exist. The origin of these differences, as we have seen, can easily be traced back to the differing and mostly contradicting pictures of Christ presented by the authors of New Testament books especially the four Gospels. Crossan rightly observes that if one reads "those four texts vertically, as it were, from start to finish and one after another, you get generally persuasive impression of unity, harmony, and agreement. But if you read them horizontally, focusing on this or that unit and comparing it across two, three, or four versions, it is disagreement rather than agreement that strikes one most forcibly. By even the middle of the second century, pagan opponents, like Celsus, and Christian apologists, like Justin, Tatian and Marcion were well aware of those discrepancies, even if only between, say, Matthew and Luke."[737] The Church has been using "the documents it has selected in order to prove its own credentials. The documents are chosen so as to prove what the Church wants proved."[738] Even in these carefully selected documents there is not one single uniform picture of the person around

whom the entire material revolves. Following the New Testament, Christianity has always been grappling with the question of understanding who he really is? D. Cupitt rightly observes that "More than any other religion Christianity has revolved obsessively around one particular man: it has loved him, worshipped him, mediated upon him, portrayed him, and sought to imitate him-but he slips away."[739] There is no single preached Christ, "An immense variety of ideals of character have been based upon the example of Jesus: an historical man who lived only one life has been made the exemplar of a great range of different forms of life. Jesus has been declared to be a model for hermits, peasants, gentlemen, revolutionaries, pacifists, feudal lords, soldiers and others. If we restrict attention to the religious life of men in the Latin West alone, the diversity is great among the ideals of Benedict, Francis, Bruno, and Ignatius Loyola."[740]

Even contemporary scholarship is polarized over which picture or image of Jesus is to be accepted as authentic. Daniel J. Harrington in his presidential address to the Catholic Biblical Association at Georgetown University on August 6, 1986 gave a "short description of seven different images of Jesus that have been proposed by scholars in recent years, the differences relating to the different Jewish backgrounds against which they have chosen to locate their image of the historical Jesus."[741] There is Jesus as a political revolutionary by S. G. F. Brandon,[742] as a magician by Morton Smith,[743] as a Galilean charismatic by Geza Vermes,[744] as a Galilean rabbi by Bruce Chilton,[745] as a Hillelite or proto-Pharisee or an essene by Harvey Falk,[746] and as an eschatological prophet by E. P. Sanders.[747] To Crossan this "stunning diversity is an academic embarrassment."[748]

This fact of notorious diversity of pictures, ideals, concepts and interpretations of Jesus Christ has led some to conclude that "every one who writes a life of Jesus sees his own face at the bottom of a deep well."[749] Moreover, we have very limited reliable narrations about Jesus which even combined together do not give us "access to Jesus himself, but only to several different portraits of him."[750] One has no choice but to conclude with R.H. Lightfoot that "the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us."[751]

This perhaps is the reason that Christians throughout their history could not universally agree upon one single, logical and uniform doctrine about the person of Christ and have always been perplexed in this regard. M. F. Wiles observes, that "Christology has never ceased to puzzle and to perplex the minds of Christians from earliest times."[752] Almost all New Testament books and the subsequent history of dogma witness to this fact. This, too, is exactly the situation with the contemporary Christian thought. On the other hand, a great majority of Christians, while differing over the ideas of Christ's person and his relationship with God, seem to agree upon his cross and the significance of his redemptive work.[753] In other words, the concept of `Incarnation' is so pervasive in most of the Christian circles and in its tradition as a whole, that Christianity is often described as incarnational faith. R. Swinburne observes that "The central doctrine of Christianity is that God intervened in human history in the person of Jesus Christ in a unique way; and that quickly became understood as the doctrine that in Jesus Christ God became man."[754] If there is any difference, and there are many as mentioned earlier, that is because of different understandings of `incarnation'.

The Traditional Orthodox standpoint:

The orthodox understanding of the doctrine of incarnation is that God's incarnation took place in the particular individual Jesus of Nazareth. They follow the Church Father's theology culminating in the Creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon, fully recognizing Christ's proper divinity/Godhead, co-existentiality and equality with the Father, two natures one Person and redemption. They believe as Brunner observes that "The way to the knowledge of Jesus leads from the human Jesus to the Son of God and to Godhead."[755]

D. M. Baillie, for instance, writes: "it was the eternal Word, the eternal Son, very God of very God, that was incarnate in Jesus."[756] He also observes that "while the life lived by Jesus was wholly human, that which was incarnate in Him was of the essence of God, the very Son of the Father, very God of Very God."[757] The traditional doctrine of Trinity, to Baillie, is "an indispensable summing-up of the Christian Gospel for the life of worship...unless we have a Christology our whole conception of God is impoverished or even perverted, and now I might say the same thing about the doctrine of Trinity. To those who know and accept the whole Christian story, this doctrine is a symbolical epitome of the truth about God, and its constant use in our worship helps to secure that we are drawing near to God as He really is- the God who was incarnate in Jesus Christ."[758] He explains the doctrine of Trinity in the following words: " What the doctrine of the Trinity really asserts is that it is God's very nature not only to create finite persons whom He could love, and reveal and impart Himself to them, even to the point of incarnation (through His eternal Word) but also to extend this indwelling to those men who fail to obey Him, doing in them what they could not do themselves, supplying to them the obedience which He requires them to render (through His Holy Spirit). All of this, says the dogma of the Trinity, is of the eternal nature and essence of God. He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Son and the Spirit are consubstantial with the Father.... Surely this doctrine is the objective expression of the same great paradox which finds its subjective expression in the confession: `Not I, but the grace of God.' "[759] C. Gore in his book "The Incarnation of the Son of God" has already made the Anglican position very clear. "if Christ was to be worshipped, it could only be because He was God, very God; belonging to the one eternal nature." He further argued that the doctrine of Christ's divinity did not involve more than "the first principle of the Theist's creed, that there is only one God, one supreme object of worship, that Christ is, if God at all, then the very God the Father's substance and essential nature....He was really man, so also He was really God."[760] He concluded arguing that "Christ then is God incarnate. In Him the human nature is assumed by the divine Person."[761]

This is the old 'Modalist Monarchianism', the theology of God-Man, which was at work at the bottom of the orthodox theology in the past and is still prevalent in the orthodox circles. As a matter of fact, observes McGiffert, "the orthodox Christology was built not on the life of the historic figure Jesus Christ, as reflected in the gospels, but on a theory of redemption framed in large part independently of him and translated into the terms of prevailing philosophy of the age."[762] Throughout our discussion of the development of Christology we have seen that for the sake of salvation, Christ has always been deified, worshipped, and exalted to complete equality and eternity with God. His humanity, though asserted superficially, has been just a lip service on the part of orthodoxy. "It is true", writes Paul Badham, "that all orthodox writers pay lip service

to Christ's humanity and describe him as "consubstantial with us" in his human nature. But all meaning seems evacuated from these claims when Christ is denied any human individuality or subjectivity."[763] In the case of some Fathers like Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, not only him but ordinary Christian believers have been deified through Jesus the Christ. It may not be inappropriate to quote Harnack here who argues, "There is an old story of a man who was in a condition of ignorance, dirt, and wretchedness and who was one day told by God that he might wish for anything he liked and that his wish would be granted. And he began to wish for more and more and to get higher and higher, and he got all he wanted. At last he got presumptuous and wished he might become like God Himself, when at once he was back again in his dirt and wretchedness. The history of religion is such a story; but it is in the history of the religion of Greeks and Eastern that it came true in the strictest sense....They became Christians and desired perfect knowledge and a supra-moral life. Finally they wished even in this world to be as God in knowledge, bliss, and life, and then they fell down, not all at once, but with fall that could not be stopped, to the lowest stage in ignorance, dirt, and barbarity."[764]

The thought of incarnation in its developed sense, as we have discussed, is not clearly spelled out in the New Testament. "Incarnation", observes Maurice Wiles, "in its full and proper sense, is not something directly presented in scripture. It is a construction built on the variegated evidence to be found there."[765] But to ensure salvation, the Greek and Alexandrian Fathers made it the sole theme of their understanding of the person of Christ from the divergent New Testament pictures of him. They brought the person of the transcendent God of the universe in the universe, in the material world of flesh and body and crucified him on the cross. Though they have always been denying this accusation of crucifying God, in reality that is what they did and intended to do for the sake of salvation. St. Gregory Nazaianzus was honest enough to say it plainly that "We needed an incarnate God, a God put to death that we might live."[766] The salvation would have not been possible if the one crucified was not God. Athanasius said it clearly and confessed that the body crucified was God's body. "The Word bore the weakness of the flesh as His own, for it was His own flesh, and the flesh was serviceable to the working of the Godhead, for it was in the Godhead, it was God's body."[767] Whether one takes it analogically or metaphorically, the language is too corporeal and anthropomorphic. Therefore, as Tillich observes, "Salvation is the problem of Christology."[768] If according to their own definition Jesus the historical human being was the God-Man Person who was one in substance with God, whose flesh was God's own flesh, he was co-eternal, pre-existent, proper God, Omnipotent, Omniscient, sinless, the Lord of Glory and Majesty, in whom the One divine Person was at work, the worshipped and adored one, then whatever method they adopt to stop the divine from crucifixion would be in vain because according to their own witness it was the body of God, the Jesus Christ who was crucified. Some of them had the courage to assert that. Others tried to hide it behind the garbs or to use Paul Badham's term behind the "smoke-screen"[769] of paradoxes and mysteries. According to Dorothy Sayers "All this was not very creditable to us, even if He was (as many people thought and think) only a harmless crazy preacher. But if the Church is right about Him, it was more discreditable still; for the man we hanged was God Almighty."[770]

Incarnation in the literal sense of salvation does not solve the problem of the relationship of Jesus with God at all. It ends up in contradictions and paradoxes whatever way one tries to interpret it. Moreover, its terminology as well as development owes a great deal to Greek philosophy and

imperial politics. John Hick is right in observing that "There are strong reasons then for seeing the patristic development and interpretation of incarnational belief, not as gradual dawning of the truth inspired by the Holy Spirit, but as historically determined development which led to the blind alley of paradox, illogicality and docetism. It is not satisfactory to assert that nevertheless it was in the providence of God that philosophical system was available and made possible the resultant true formulations. Appeals to providence are too easily invalidated by subsequent history." Moreover, whatever the intention, the incarnational language is so anthropomorphic, corporeal and mythological that one can easily conclude with Richard Jeffery, who in reference to Christ's crucifixion observed, "If God had been there, he would not have let them do it."[772] On the other hand, the real problem is that the traditional Christian religion or in the words of Whale, "the whole of Christian religion rests on the fact that God was there."[773]

Once 'Incarnation' was declared as the central doctrine of Christianity, observes Harnack, "The one God, whom the people have never understood, threatened to disappear, even in the views of refined theologians...."[774] If in Jesus the fullness of God is incarnate then "Jesus can be worshipped as God without risk of error or blasphemy. A cult of Christ as distinct from a cult of God thus becomes defensible, and did in fact developed. The practice of praying direct to Christ in the Liturgy, as distinct from praying to God through Christ, appears to have originated among the innovating `orthodox' opponents of Arianism in the fourth century."[775] There is no reason then to deny the fact that incarnation in the Christian traditional sense does lead some to naive polytheism. This has been the case with a great majority of Christian believers, to use Harnack's term, the Christianity of second rank, since the end of the second century, "There existed in Christendom,...from the end of the second century, a kind of subsidiary religion, one of the second rank, as was subterranean, different among different peoples, but every where alike in its crass superstition, naive doketism, dualism, and polytheism. "Whenever religions change, it is as if mountains open. Among the great magic snakes, golden dragons and crystal spirits of the human soul, which ascend to the light, there come forth all sorts of hideous reptiles and a host of rats and mice....There probably never was an age in which Christendom was free from this " Christianity", just as there never will be one in which it shall have been overcome."[776]

Jesus Christ the incarnate God was also the son of Mary. Incarnation and then the early Church Father's usage of terms like 'the Bearer of God' '*Theotoka* or Mother of God' promoted worship of Mary, a mere human being. "But Mary obtained her chief, her positively dogmatic significance from the fact that the dogma of the Incarnation became the central dogma of the Church." Nestorius cried in vain to Cyril and to the Church in general, "Do not make the Virgin into a goddess." It is an outrageous innovation. But, as observes Don Cupitt, "It brings out an odd feature of Christianity, its mutability and the speed with which innovations come to be vested with religious solemnity to such an extent that any one who questions them *himself* regarded as the dangerous innovator and heretic."[778] Nestorius was declared a heretic and Mary was exalted above all creatures, above Cherubim and Seraphim and got the position at the right hand of the Son. The reason, as is clear from the statement of John of Damascus, is that " The name `Bearer of God' represents the whole mystery of the Incarnation. The Holy Spirit purified Mary with a view to the conception."[779] She was worshipped, called upon in prayers for support and help and her pictures and images were worshipped. Commenting on this development Harnack observes, "Pictures of Christ, Mary and the saints, had been already worshipped from the fifth (fourth) century with

greetings, prostration, a renewal of ancient pagan practices. In the naive and confident conviction that Christians no longer ran any risk of idolatry, the Church not only tolerated, but promoted, the entrance of paganism. It was certainly the intention to worship the divine in the material; for the incarnation of deity had deified nature (ousia)"[780]

In addition to the above mentioned problems, the doctrine of Incarnation taken literally could lead to God's depiction in concrete corporeal human images. Don Cupitt rightly observes that "If it is the case that in the incarnation God himself has permanently assumed human nature, and can legitimately be depicted as God in human form, then eventually the ultimate mystery of deity will be conceived anthrpomorphically, and the pagan notion of a deity as a superhuman person with gender will be restored. In due course this happened, aided by the traditional Father-Son imagery."[781] In the East the Church showed reservation in this matter and permitted only the depiction of the Deity in a human form different from the human form of Christ in the standard iconography of scenes like Baptism, where a hand emerges from the cloud to release the dove upon Jesus' head. But after the sixteenth century, under the influence of the West, images of God appeared in the East. The West has been less conservative in this regard. The anthropomorphic images of God became very common in the West after about 1100.[782] Don Cupitt is quite right in protesting against these developments: "It is my contention that the doctrine of Christ as God's divine Son has here humanized deity to an intolerable degree. The strangeness of it is seldom noticed even to this day. A sensitive theologian like Austin Farrer can dwell eloquently upon a medieval icon of the Trinity, and a philosopher as gifted as Wittgenstein can discuss Michelangelo's painting of God in the Sistene Chaple, and in neither case is it noticed there *could* be people to whom such pagan anthropomorphism is abhorrent, because it signifies a 'decline of religion' in the only sense that really matters, namely, a serious corruption of faith in God."[783]

In view of what has been said, it becomes evident that the traditional Christian concept of deity is anthropomorphic and corporeal, especially in terms of the language that has been used throughout Christian history to describe these concepts. It is not only paradoxical, it is contradictory. It does not solve the problem of Jesus' relationship with God, the problem for which it was invented. Finally it does not explain or achieve salvation either. D. Sayers writes: "What are we to make of that? ...if He was God and nothing else, His immortality means nothing to us; if He was man and no more, his death is no more important than yours or mine."[784] It is notoriously difficult to understand the two natures, one person, true human and true God, and the mode of union between them. These are mere speculations having very little impact on the practical understanding of the person of Jesus. They render, observes Sayers, "The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the whole thing incomprehensible. Something put in by theologians to make it more difficult-nothing to do with daily life or ethics."[785] These kinds of contradictions or mysteries might have been of some sense in the times of the early Church Fathers in the light of Platonism, Stoicism, Neo-Platonism, or other trends or schools of that day philosophy. Our present day knowledge and thought patterns make it impossible to understand literally the doctrine of "Incarnation" without landing into crude anthropomorphism and polytheism, especially the cross part of it. "That God should play the tyrant over man is a dismal story of unrelieved oppression; that man should play the tyrant over man is the usual dreary record of human futility; but that man should play the tyrant over God and find Him a better man than himself is an astonishing drama indeed."[786]

These difficulties are recognized by a number of modern Christian theologians. R. Bultmann, for instance, talking about traditional doctrine of `atonement' and 'salvation' argues, "How can the guilt of one man be expiated by the death of another who is sinless-if indeed one may speak of a sinless man at all? What primitive notions of guilt and righteousness does this imply? And what primitive idea of God? The rational of sacrifice in general may of course throw some light on the theory of atonement, but even so, what a primitive mythology it is, that a divine Being should become incarnate, and atone for the sins of men through his own blood!...Moreover, if the Christ who died such a death was the pre-existent Son of God, what could death mean to him? Obviously very little, if he knew that he would rise again in three days."[787] He gets more emphatic in regards to salvation theory, and describing the doctrine of God-man as Gnostic, argues that, "gnostic influence suggests that this Christ who died and rose again, was not a mere human being but a God-man....It is only when with effort that modern man can think himself back into such an intellectual atmosphere, and even then he could never accept it himself, because it regards man's essential being as nature and redemption as a process of nature." He further argues that "as far the pre-existence of Christ, with its corollary of man's translation into a celestial realm of light, and the clothing of the human personality in heavenly robes and a spiritual body- all this is not only irrational but utterly meaningless. Why should salvation take this particular form?"[788] He declares this as a `myth' and calls upon the Church to reinterpret this myth in the light of modern knowledge and Kerygma. Though "Little we know of his life and personality" claims Bultmann, "we know enough of his *message* to make for ourselves a consistent picture."[789] Without understanding the New Testament mythology in the light of Kerygma the Christian message would be unintelligible to the modern man. "The danger both for theological scholarship and for the Church is that this uncritical resuscitation of the New Testament mythology may make the Gospel message unintelligible to the modern world."[790]

Paula Fredriksen argues that "After the introduction of Galileo's map of the universe, the technological advances of the Scientific Revolution, and the social and cultural revolutions that followed in its wake, modern culture no longer looks to Plato. More current systems of thought- anthropology, psychology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, existentialism, evolutionary science, medicine- now provide the meaningful constructs that in turn effect theological ideas of personhood. Modern Christianity, in consequence, must search for new ways to express its ancient faith in Jesus Christ as true God and true man."[791]

Richard Swinburne tries to express the ancient Christian faith in modern terms by emphasizing the analogical and metaphorical nature of many terms used in the New Testament. He argues that "While the divine predicates-'good', 'wise', 'powerful'- are used of God in their literal senses, there seem to me plenty of words which are used (in my sense) analogically of God."[792] For instance, God is said to be 'angry', loving etc. the words which imply passion. "But traditional Christian theology has affirmed vigorously and constantly that God has no body, and has no inclination to act contrary to reason; and hence the use of such words in official Christian pronouncements must be so interpreted that they do not carry these latter elements of meaning."[793] In the same manner "God is a person, yet one without a body, seems the most elementary claim of theism."[794] Swinburne further argues that "despite the fact that clearly theology supposes him to be a person in much the same sense of 'person' as human are persons, he cannot be a 'person' in quite the same

sense. 'Person' must be being used analogically with respect to God."[795] Moreover, theology like other disciplines makes use of metaphors and "Talk in all creeds of the first person of the Holy Trinity as 'the Father' and the second person as 'the Son', who was `begotten' by 'the Father', 'not made', may also be classified as metaphorical; although this use of 'Father' was perhaps sufficiently well established and clear in Jewish thought to be regarded as analogical."[796] He contends that the earlier Fathers clearly recognized the inadequacy of human language and some of them recommended non-literal interpretation of some of the biblical passages. "There developed however from the sixth century onward a movement which coloured much Christian theology for the next five centuries, the *via negativa.* This, very loosely, claimed that all that could be said about God was what he is *not*, and what were the effects of his actions in the world. We could know nothing about what God was like in himself; and so all cradle claims and prayers were to be read with this restriction."[797] He somewhat agreeing with this negative or apophatic approach, concludes that "sentences of human language can tell us quite a bit about God; but that they are very inadequate tools for the job."[798]

Has Swinburne introduced something new into age long traditional Christian theology? Did the assertions of Clement and Origen made in the second century about the ineffability and transcendence of God stop the later Fathers and Christianity from crucifying the Person of God? Does emphasis upon apophatic or *via negativa* theology solve the issue at hand or make the Christian message more intelligible? There could be many questions of the same nature. The answer to all these thorny questions seem to be no! Despite some very innovative and positive contributions here, Swinburne is not bringing some very innovative elements into Christian theology.

Pseudo-Dionysius, the unknown author of the so-called Areopagitic writings: a person who had long been mistakenly identified with a disciple of St. Paul-Dionysius the Areopagite,[799] divided the theology into two main categories: the *cataphatic* or positive theology that proceeds by affirmations and the *apophatic* or negative theology that proceeds by negations. Ruling out the first, he emphasized the other. "The perfect way, the only way which is fitting in regards to God, who is of His very nature unknowable, is the second-which leads us finally to total ignorance. All knowledge has as its object that which is. Now God is beyond all that exists. In order to approach Him it is necessary to deny all that is inferior to Him, that is to say, all that which is. If in seeing God one can know what one sees, then one has not seen God in Himself but something intelligible, something which is inferior to Him. It is by *unknowing* ... that one may know Him who is above every possible object of knowledge. Proceeding by negations one ascends from the inferior degrees of being to the highest, by progressively setting aside all that can be known, in order to draw near to the Unknown in the darkness of absolute ignorance."[800] The three Cappadocians tried to defend the apophatic basis of all true theology as seen above.[801] St. Maximus the Confessor, St. John Damascene, the ninth-century Irish philosopher John Scotus Eriugena and the great St. Thomas Aquinas are just a few names to be mentioned in this regard. Swinburne, like these traditional theologians, despite great emphasis on metaphorical and analogical nature of God-talk, could not solve the problem of incomprehensible nature of God vs. the doctrine of Incarnation of Jesus the Christ.

Swinburne takes a route somewhat similar to that of the Fathers. Using modern concepts, Swinburne attempts to reach the conclusions that are awfully close to the traditional Christian dogmas. He defines sin as "Failure in a duty to God...If a person does what is wrong (whether or not he realizes it), he sins objectively. If he does what he believes to be wrong, he sins subjectively."[802] He further argues that "Each of us suffers from the burden of actual and original sin."[803] He contends that "Christ's life and death is indeed, as he intended, efficacious for anyone who pleads it as a perfect atonement for his actual sins and the sins of others with whom he is involved."[804] He observes that "God did indeed become incarnate in Christ and lived a human life so perfect that it ended in a foreseen death, and if he intended that life should be available to be used by us to make our atonement, it is indeed the sort of thing which we could offer God as our reparation and penance....Given that Christ the man who made the offering intending it to avail fully for our atonement, is also the God to whom it was offered, he will forgive us without demanding more."[805] The problem of logically explaining that why God is making the sacrifice to Himself is given a kind of new dimension by observing that "it is good that there be reparation and penance, it is good that these be substantial; that the atoning sacrifice be not a trivial one. And it is good that our creator should share our lot, and of his generosity make available to us his sacrificial life."[806] He concludes, observing that "God in Christ performs an act which makes an objective contribution to removing our guilt which we ourselves were in no position to make." Had the guilt been absolutely eliminated from Christians after such a huge sacrifice, then, it would have been possible to make some sense out of what Swinburne is trying to argue. It is the other way around. Many of the great Bishops, Cardinals and Christians still are sinful and guilty like other human beings. To sacrifice God for the sake of such a meager accomplishment is too much a price to pay.

To what extent Swinburne uses traditional Christian terms metaphorically or analogically becomes evident in his discussion of "Could God Become Man?". He defines a human being by arguing that "It is sufficient if you have a human body animated by a human soul."[808] It is not the bodily continuity or continuity of memory or character that makes for the identity of a human being. It is the soul. "The soul is the subject of experience and initiator of action; and is the essential part of any human being or other person, whose possession makes any future individual that individual."[809] He contends that "if we don't draw the limit of the human too strictly, certainly God can become man. He would do this by acquiring a human body (joining his soul to an unowned human body), acting, acquiring beliefs, sensations and desires through it. Remaining God, he would have become man by acquiring an extension to his normal modes of operation."[810] Using Freud's theory of divided mind Swinburne argues that "If God's human actions are done only in the light of his beliefs, then he will feel the limitations that we have. God in becoming incarnate will not have limited his powers, but he will have taken on a *way* of operating which is limited and *feels* limited. So using the notion of divided mind we can coherently suppose God to become incarnate while remaining God, and yet act and feel much like ourselves."[811] He concludes, arguing that "The Chalcedonian definition is not merely self-consistent but consistent with the New Testament picture of Christ as acting in ignorance and weakness, and subject to temptation. God could become man in a rather fuller sense than the traditional interpretation allowed."[812]

Swinburne seems to be confusing the issue even more than the Monarchians. In certain ways they spared God's nature from human corruptions, limitations and qualifications. Swinburne seems to

be committing this mistake. He is making God pay a very high price for little accomplishment. What kind of divine nature would adopt the human limitations and what kind of human nature would the two minded person of human Jesus be? The figure would not be just with two heads but also with two minds though quite confused and diffused ones. Therefore, Swinburne's interpretation of Christ's relationship with God has its own limitations. It has to solve the problem of Jesus' human soul and true humanity, issue of his true will, problem of an unusual person neither complete God nor complete man, and the issue at hand of anthropomorphism in the light of God's suffering and feeling of pain etc. in a human body. Though interesting enough, his interpretations may not be fully intelligible either to the liberals or to the orthodoxy.

It is John Hick, who by his revolutionary but controversial book "*The Myth of God Incarnate*", has taken long strides in the direction of recognition and then reconstruction of this issue. He has brought the old theological controversies back to the Christian intelligentsia, the theologians as well as philosophers, in a view to make Jesus intelligible and acceptable to the people of the modern world. He starts his article "Jesus and the World Religions" with the recognition of the problem in the following words: "If we start from where we are, as Christians of our own day, we begin amidst the confusion and uncertainty which assail us when we try to speak about Jesus, the historical individual who lived in Galilee in the first third of the first century of the Christian era. For New Testament scholarship has shown how fragmentary and ambiguous are data available to us as we try to look back across nineteen and a half centuries, and at the same time how large and how variable is the contribution of the imagination to our 'pictures' of Jesus. In one sense it is true to say that he has been worshipped by millions; and yet in another sense, in term of subjective 'intentionality', a number of different beings, describable in partly similar and partly different ways, have been worshipped under the name of Jesus or under the title of Christ."[813] He believes that the traditional or 'Incarnational' interpretation of Jesus is mostly the work of Greco-Roman world which produced this unique Christ-Figure to meet their spiritual needs. Here in this strange environment, he argues, the Christian theology "made the very significant transition from 'Son of God' to 'God the Son', the Second Person of Trinity."[814]

In his "*God and the Universe of Faiths*" he observes that "What seems to have happened during the hundred years or so following Jesus' death was that the language of divine sonship floated loose from the original ground of Jewish thought and developed a new meaning as it took root in Graeco-Roman culture....Thus the meaning of the Christ-event was first expressed by saying that Jesus was a Messiah, to whom in the Old Testament God has said, 'Thou art my beloved Son'; and then this divine sonship was later understood as his being of one substance with God the Father."[815] He further argues that "If, however, Christianity had happened to expand eastwards, so that its basic thinking had been done within an Asian instead of a European culture, its intellectual interpretations would inevitably have taken very different forms."[816] For him "Christianity is an ongoing movement of life and thought, defined by its origin in the Christ-event and by its consciousness of that origin. It cannot be defined in terms of adherence to any doctrinal standard, for its doctrines are historically and culturally conditioned and have changed as the church has entered new historical and cultural situations. Accordingly it is impossible to predict or to limit the developments that will take place in the future history of this movement."[817]

Regarding the deity of Jesus and incarnation of God in him, Hick observes that "The Christian's faith in the deity of Christ is an interpretation of a human life and personality as being more than human, as being continuous with the life of God. This interpretation both involves and transcends an ethical valuation of his personality. The deity of Christ was mediated first through his moral character."[818] He further argues that because of "threefold sense of a divine purpose and love and forgiveness embodied in Christ was later reflected in the thought of the Church as the dogma of Christ's deity....The disciples' innate tendency to interpret their experience religiously was powerfully evoked by and focused upon the person of Christ, and it deepened into a consciousness that in some infinitely significant and momentous sense Jesus Christ was God incarnate."[819] On the other hand, he claims that "it seems pretty clear that Jesus did not present himself as being God incarnate. He did not present himself as the second person of a divine trinity leading a human life. If in his lifetime he was called "son of God," as is entirely possible, it would be in the metaphorical sense that was familiar in the ancient world."[820]

To him, the problem lies in the Fathers' literal interpretation of the New Testament's metaphorical as well as mythological language about the person of Christ and stripping him of meaning, "the fateful development that created what was to become orthodox Christian belief for many centuries occurred when this poetry hardened into prose and the metaphorical son of God, with a small s, was transmuted into the metaphysical God the Son, with a capital S. The philosophers then developed the explanatory theory that Jesus had two complete natures, one human and the other divine, and that in his divine nature he was of the same substance as God the Father, while his human nature he was of the same substance as humanity."[821] He argues that this traditional two-natures Christology of Nicea and Chalcedon was a literal understanding of Incarnation. "If we distinguish between, on one hand, a literal statement (whether it be empirical or metaphysical), and on the other hand metaphorical, poetic, symbolic and mythological statements, the Nicene formula was undoubtedly intended to be understood literally. It asserts that Jesus was literally (not mere metaphorically) divine and also literally (and not mere metaphorically) man. As divine he was not analogous to God, or poetically-speaking God, or as-if God; he was, actually and literally God-incarnate. And again, as human he was really, truly and literally a man."[822] He goes on arguing that "orthodoxy has never been able to give this idea any content. It remains a form of words without assignable meaning. For to say, without explanation, that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was also God is as devoid of meaning as to say that this circle drawn with a pencil on paper is also a square. Such a locution has to be given semantic content: and in the case of the language of incarnation every content thus far suggested has had to be repudiated."[823] The problem with the traditional Christian belief, to quote V. A. Harvey, is that "in contrast to all other texts, it sets aside our present critically interpreted experience when it comes to interpreting the New Testament. It assumes that in this case alone what our critically interpreted experience tells us is "impossible" is not only possible but probable and certain."[824]

According to Hick's understanding, the doctrine of `Incarnation' is a mythological idea and literally not true at all and "a Christian does not have to accept those philosophical and theological theories of the third and fourth centuries."[825] Like every other myth it was introduced to "evoke an attitude."[826] The real significance of Jesus does not lie in his divinity or incarnation but in his example and model. For "He is the one in following whom we have found ourselves in God's presence and have found God's meaning for our lives. He is our sufficient model of true humanity

in a perfect relationship to God."[827] Though the concept of "sufficient model of true humanity" should be understood in the light of such a data available in the New Testament books, the limitations of which have already been discussed above.

Paul Badham takes a different route to reach the same conclusion as that of Hick. He rejects the literal interpretations of the doctrine of `Incarnation' due to two valid theological reasons. He observes that, "all attempts to speak out the doctrine of the incarnation as literal proposition face the following conundrums:
(a) if the historical Jesus had access to divine knowledge or power then he cannot truly be described as God incarnate for he did not, in terms of our present understanding of what it means to be human person, genuinely become a "man like us in all respects save sin";
(b) If Jesus was a "man like us in all respects save sin" no grounds can be adduced for supposing him to be God incarnate."[828]

Badham disagrees with Hick that the Fathers took the incarnation literally, "I find this quite impossible to accept."[829] I think it is an oversimplification of the issue. The traditional phraseology, concepts of atonement and salvation, understandings about the deity, person, nature, union and body of Christ, the outcome of these understandings in regards to Jesus' worship, images and also images of Mary and God, in short all history of the 'Incarnational Thought' points to the validity of Hick's thesis and denial of what Badham himself argues as valid theological reasons. In the light of what has been discussed in the previous pages, it becomes fairly difficult to accept Badham's thesis.

The same Cappadocian Father, St. Gregory of Nyssa, whom he quotes saying that "every concept our minds can form relative to God is a simulacrum, a false likeness, an idol. There is only one name by which the divine nature can be expressed; the wonder which seizes the soul when it thinks of God".[830] Same is the Father who also uses such an anthropomorphic and corporeal language as that of saying that "Yet we have no doubt, from the recorded miracles, that God underwent birth in human nature. But *how* this happened we decline to investigate as a matter beyond the scope of reason."[831] He also writes, "...since *God infused Himself into perishable humanity* for this purpose, namely, that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminated Himself in every believer through that flesh whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers, to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption."[832] The Cappadocians and others whom Badham quotes, in my opinion, seem not to deny the literal meanings of the incarnation. They perhaps are just recognizing and expressing the impossibility of knowing the essence of God the Father and also recognizing the difficulty of putting what they believe *vis-a-vis* incarnation in a logical and intelligible way by observing: "if explanation be sought let us acknowledge that it is a marvel...what God can do let us own we cannot probe."[833] Gregory of Nazianzus, in one of his sermons, observed that "the very incomprehensibility of the dogma of the Trinity brings us up against the absolute mystery of God; it reminds us that we must not hope to understand him."[834]

Therefore, it seems plausible to argue that the doctrine of incarnation is not meaningless because the Fathers did not mean it literally but because of what Badham himself observes, "that the

doctrine of the incarnation cannot be presented as a factual hypothesis because all efforts at spelling it out do violence either to the notion of humanity or divinity."[835]

Finally, rejecting the terms like 'myth', 'story', 'poetry', because of their negative implications, Badham chooses the concept of 'metaphor and symbol' to envisage the meanings of incarnation. Thus he arrives at the same conclusion as John Hick when he argues, "if I say "I am on fire with love," I am using the metaphor of fire to indicate the intensity of my emotions. Likewise, to call Jesus divine is to say that in him we see the personality of God insofar as that can be expressed in a human life....Jesus can stand as a symbol for God because, Christians believe, his life exemplifies God-like behavior."[836]

Here Badham is committing the same mistake that he makes Hick responsible for. The mistake of putting his views forward "in conscious opposition to the mainstream of Christian orthodoxy."[837] He, like Hick, does not believe that Christ is from the *ousia* (substance) of God; that he enjoys divine nature, proper Godhead that of equal to God in power and majesty. Badham further maintains the human person of Jesus before and even after the so-called incarnation. He should reflect upon the fate of Paul of Samosata and Nestorius to know how much in line he is with the orthodox view point. I see in this "ideal example" or "model" Christology an echo of the old Antiochian theology which, in spite of its scientific treatment of the issue, was condemned as heretical.

Although the perfect "example" Christology draws a clear-cut line between God and Jesus, saves Christianity from crude anthropomorphism and shadows of paganism, and makes Christian faith in line with and meaningful to other universal faith groups, nevertheless it does not comply with the set rules of traditional Christianity as Brunner observes, "The view of Jesus as the perfect Ideal of ethical or religious truth would then correspond to one part of the Christian creed, namely, the statement that Jesus is not only *a* true man, but that He is *the* true Man. But the exceptional position assigned to Jesus-an absolute and not a relative one-which is implied in the Christian doctrine of Real Humanity of Jesus, presupposes that Jesus, True Man, the Sinless One, could only be True Man because He was more than man; because He was also-God."[838] The 'Traditionalists' reject this interpretation because in this solution "the Person of Jesus has no constitutive significance."[839]

The traditional Christianity wants to have God. But how is this possible? Paul Tillich answers that, "Because of the incarnation, for in the incarnation God became something which we can have, whom we can see, with whom we can talk etc."[840] Throughout their history, the Christians have been trying to save the transcendent God from corporeality and anthropomorphisms, but their desire for salvation has very often resulted into the opposite. This probably was among the factors that the Islamic version of transcendence and monotheism, observes K. Armstrong "spread with astonishing rapidity throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Many of its enthusiastic converts in these lands (where Hellenism was not at home ground) turned with relief from Greek Trinitarianism, which expressed the mystery of God in an idiom that was alien to them, and adopted a more Semitic notion of the divine reality."[841]

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4

Anthropomorphism, Transcendence and The Qur'ān

The distinctive feature of Islam is its conception of a strict and uncompromising monotheism. Monotheism, in Islam, signifies the absolute Oneness, Unity, Uniqueness and Transcendence of God which formally does away with all notions of polytheism, pantheism, dualism, monolatry, henotheism, tritheism and trinitarianism i.e. the notion of persons participating in the divinity. The mainstream Islam has always emphasized the absolute transcendence of God and avoided corporeal notions about and anthropomorphic images of God. Such an understanding of transcendence, on the other hand, is not abstract in the philosophical sense of the term. Many expressions are used in the Qur'ān to make the transcendent deity immanent and live, so as to provide ample opportunities for a meaningful relationship. There are few Qur'ānic expressions which, if taken absolutely literally, could lead to anthropomorphic notions about the Deity. These seemingly anthropomorphic expressions have been the center of debate among Muslim theologians for centuries. These phrases, though very few in number, are often accepted as they are without how (*bilā kayf*) or interpreted metaphorically. The acceptance *bilā kayf* of these phrases is always accompanied with the absolute denial of any similarity between God and creatures or anthropomorphism and with repeated emphasis upon the divine otherness and transcendence. The submission to the will of this transcendent and unique God is Islam. To show that such a strict monotheism is the essence of Islamic faith, we need to discuss the *Qur'ān*, the central document of the Islamic faith, and *Tawḥīd*, the Islamic concept of God's unity.

The Qur'ān: An Introduction:

The Qur'ān is the "Holy Scripture" of Muslims. It is one of the most seriously read books of the world. Philip K. Hitti observes that "Although there are approximately twice as many Christians as Moslems in the world it can safely be said that the Koran is the most widely read book ever written. For besides its use in worship it is the textbook from which practically every young Moslem learns to read Arabic."[1] Muslims, all over the world, read it, reflect upon it, and take it as the original, authentic, divine revelation. It is universally accepted as the first determining principle and the primary source of Islamic system of beliefs, laws, ethics, behaviors and even emotions and attitudes. It has been the dynamic force behind the Islamic culture and civilization for the last fourteen centuries and would continue to be so in the times to come as, to the Muslims, it is the very Word of God Almighty, therefore normative and binding in nature. James A. Michener observes that "The Qur'ān is probably the most often read book in the world, surely the most often memorized; and possibly the most influential in the daily life of the people who

believe in it. Not quite so long as the New Testament, written in exalted style, it is neither poetry nor ordinary prose, yet it possesses the ability to arouse its hearers to ecstasies of faith... It is to this combination of dedication to One God, plus practical instruction, that makes the Qur'ān unique."[2] To S. Hossein Nasr "the Qur'ān constitutes the alpha and omega of the Islamic religion in the sense that all that is Islamic, whether it be its law, its thought, its spiritual and ethical teachings and even its artistic manifestations, have their roots in the explicit or implicit teachings of the Sacred Text. The Muslim is born with sound of the Qur'ān in his ear, for usually the *shahadah* which is contained in the Qur'ān is invoked into the ear of a child when it is born. He lives throughout his life surrounded by the sound of the Qur'ān which permeates the traditional Islamic city. Finally, he dies with the sound of the Qur'ān resounding around him. The Muslim, whether male or female, is in a sense enwrapped in the psalmody of the Qur'ān, from the cradle to the grave. The love of the Noble Qur'ān and devotion to its teachings have remained central to every generation of Muslims, remain so today and will always remain so as long as Islam survives as a religion on the surface of the earth."[3]

The word *'qur'an'* is an Arabic word. It is an infinitive verbal noun derived from the root *qara'ā* which means "to read", "to recite", "to combine things together".[4] Therefore, the word *"qur'ān"* literally would mean "reading, recitation, collection, revelation, a book recited or read".[5] The literal meanings of the term correspond to the nature of the book. It is read, recited, and in reading and recitation the letters and words are joined together to convey the message.[6] On the other hand Imām Shafi, the founder of one of the four schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence, held that *qur'ān* is not a derivative noun but a proper noun denoting the divinely revealed book.[7]

The "Qur'ān", as a technical term, refers to the book which is commonly defined by Muslim doctors as "The inimitable Word of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad, written in the *muṣḥaf* (book), transmitted from Muhammad successively without any break, and whose recitation is an act of devotion".[8] Al-Fārūqī defines it as the final revelation of God's will to the Prophet Muhammad "conveyed in Arabic and relayed to his companions, memorized verbatim and publicly and continuously recited by them and their descendants to the present time."[9] H. A. R. Gibb introduces the Qur'ān in the following words: "The Koran is the record of those formal utterances and discourses which Mohammad and his followers accepted as directly inspired. Muslim orthodoxy therefore regards them as the literal Word of God mediated through the angel Gabriel. They are quoted with the prefix 'God has said'; the phrase 'The Prophet said' is applied only to the sayings of Mohammad preserved in the Traditions. Mohammad's own belief, which is still held without question by his followers, was that these discourses were portions of a 'Heavenly Book' sent down to or upon him in Arabic version, not as a whole, but in sections of manageable length and in relation to the circumstances of the moment."[10]

The Qur'ān consists of a text of 114 chapters (*suwar sing. sūra*) of very unequal length, 6616 verses (ayat), 77934 words, and 323671 letters.[11] The chapters are divided into the *Makkī* and the *Madanī*,[12] after the names of two cities in Arabia where the Prophet of Islam lived, received and delivered the revelation. The *Madanī* chapters are usually longer than the *Makkī* chapters. The present order of the chapters is not chronological and, as Mir observes, "it is universally admitted

that a complete and accurate chronological arrangement of the Qur'ān is almost impossible to discover."[13] To facilitate public or private recitations, the Qur'ān has been further divided into thirty parts (*ajzā' sing. juz*) and 60 *ahzāb* or sections.

The language of the Qur'ān is Arabic. It differs from the other Arabic literary compositions and treatises in a number of ways. The Muslim scholars and theologians, following the Qur'ānic claims,[14] had always accepted the Qur'ān as the miracle of Allāh. Though the views about what constitutes the miraculous character (i`jāz) of the Qur'ān differ in different scholars, nevertheless, there is a consensus among the Muslim scholars and theologians that the Qur'ān is miraculous in nature. "As a proof of its being the Word of God, the Qur'ān presents the claim that none can produce the like of it, that it is inimitable. Muslim theologians later developed this claim into a full-fledged doctrine of the Qur'ānic *i`jāz*. With the exception of a few writers, like Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn ar-Rāwandī (d. 298/910), Muslim writers have unanimously held the Qur'ān to be *mu`jiz* ("inimitable"), though they have differed on precisely how Qur'ānic *i`jāz* is to be explained."[15] Helmut Gatje observes that "Although opinions concerning the validity and significance of these views, and concerning particulars, may vary, the fundamental existence of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān has not been doubted by Muslim exegetes."[16]

A great majority of Muslim scholars have held that the language, style, beauty and the ideas of the Qur'ān are inimitable and miraculous.[17] In addition to several other miraculous factors in the Qur'ān, like the presence of correct scientific data, accurate predictions about the future events, reports about the past, a great variety of ideas, concepts and institutions etc.,[18] the language of the Qur'ān is held as divine, perfect, eternal, unchangeable and unsurpassable.[19]

Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī (319-388 H/ 931-998) observes that the key to the Qur'ānic *i`jāz* is Qur'ānic eloquence. "The Qur'ān is inimitable", he writes, "in that it employs the most eloquent words in ideal forms of composition (*aḥsan nuẓūm at-ta'līf*), embodying the truest meanings."[20]Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (338-403/950-1013) argues that the Qur'ānic inimitability is connected with the *Naẓm and Badī`*. The *Badī`* denotes that branch of eloquence that deals with the use of literary devices like the *mumāthalah* (similarity), *mubālaghah* (emphatic statement), *muṭābaqah* (contrasting pairs), *tajnīs* (paronomasia), *isti`ārah* (metaphor) etc. Bāqillānī discusses these literary devices in details[21] and argues that the Qur'ān has made use of these devices in such an eloquent manner (without effecting proper communication) that no body can imitate such a usage and eloquence.[22] Though the *I`jāz* is not confined to these aspects only, the greater part of it, to Bāqillānī, lies in the Qur'ānic *naẓm* as a whole i.e the unique relationship between the words and meanings.[23] Abū Bakr al-Jurjānī (d.471/1078), in his book *"Dalā'il al-I`jāz"*, also discusses many literary devices and subtleties of the Arabic language at great length.[24] He, like Bāqillānī, connects the Qur'ānic *I`jāz* with the *Naẓm.*[25] He argues that the Qur'ān relates the words in a such a fashion that it establishes a casual connection between them. The Qur'ān miraculously maintains this *naẓm* while fully adhering to *m`ānī al-naḥw* (grammatical rules or meanings).[26]Abū al-Qāsim al- Zamakhsharī also wrote extensively about the *i`jāz* (inimitability) of the Qur'ān. In the beginning of his famous commentary on the Qur'ān, he thanks God for revealing *"kalāman mu'allafan munaẓẓaman"* meaning "a well-composed and well-knit

discourse).[27] His concept of the Qur'ānic *naẓm,* in essence, is similar to the views of Bāqillānī and Jurjānī. All these scholars regard the Qur'ānic language as inimitable.[28]

The contemporary Muslim scholars also argue that the Qur'ānic language is beautiful, its style inimitable and its composition unmatchable. Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāf'ī argues that, in addition to the above discussed aspects of the Qur'ānic inimitability, the Qur'ānic *I'jāz* is most fully revealed in its *"al-Nuẓm al-Mawsīqī"* i.e. the musical form *or nuẓm.*[29] Sayyed Quṭb emphasizes *"al-taṣwīr al-Fannī"* i.e. the artistic, imaginative, and vivid representations and depiction of thoughts, ideas, incidents, and scenes, as the most revealing aspect of the Qur'ānic inimitability.[30] It will be interesting to study this aspect of the Qur'ān in the light of modern educational or learning psychology.[31] Modern psychology has shown that mental images, vivid and imaginative representations and depiction play a vital role in encoding, storing, and retrieving the information. Allan Paivio's works on memory and encoding through verbal and imaginal forms will be helpful to elaborate the point.[32]

Al-Fārūqī observes, that "Without a doubt, the Qur'ān is beautiful, indeed, the most beautiful literary composition the Arabic language has ever known. Its beauty, however, is not the consequence of faith but its very cause. The esthetic judgment- that the Qur'ān is beautiful, nay, sublime-is not a pronouncement of faith. It is a critical judgment, reached through literary analysis. Hence, its beauty is not only held by Muslims but also by non-Muslims conversant with the literary esthetics of the Arabic language. Instead of beauty depending upon the divine origin and flowing out of faith in that origin, the divine origin of the Qur'ān is the reasoned consequence of its literary beauty. Beauty is the cause and evidence for its divine origin."[33] Fazlur Rahman, a liberal Muslim scholar, observes that, "There is a consensus among those who know Arabic well, and who appreciate the genius of the language, that in the beauty of its language and the style and power of its expression the Qur'ān is superb document. The linguistic nuances simply defy translation. Although all inspired language is untranslatable, this is even more the case with the Qur'ān."[34] John L. Esposito, a known contemporary Christian scholar of Islam, agrees with this conclusion: "Indeed, throughout history, many Arab Christians as well have regarded it as the perfection of Arabic language and literature."[35] Long before Esposito, Philip K. Hitti observed: "No small measure of its force lies in its rhyme and rhetoric and in its cadence and sweep, which cannot be reproduced when the book is translated."[36]

As a historical proof of the Qur'ānic *i'jāz* (inimitability), Al-Fārūqī, like many other traditional theologians, narrates the historical incident when the Qur'ān itself challenged the Makkan polytheists to produce a similar book (Qur'ān 18:110, 52:34), ten chapters or *suwar* like any in the Qur'ān (11:13). It challenged that "if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produce a Sūra like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allāh, if you are truthful. But if ye cannot- and of surety ye cannot-then fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones,-which is prepared for those who reject Faith."(2:23-24) But none, argues al-Fārūqī, "would rise to the bait, despite the fact that the Arabs regarded themselves the pinnacles of poetry and literary eloquence, and the Makkans, the very head of that pinnacle. The Qur'ān reduced the challenge, asking them to produce even one *sura* like any of the Qur'ān whose short *suwar* had fewer than thirty words, and inviting them to bring their own gods

to help. (17:18) The terrible struggle which the Makkans waged against Muhammad, with all its cost in blood and injury, in tribal division and hatred, in economic hardship, could have been stopped and finished by Makkan victory if they could only compose a few verses that would equal or surpass the Qur'ān in literary beauty and eloquence."[37] In spite of several efforts of the Arab poets and literary, promises of the greatest prizes for the compositions, earnest desire to defeat Muhammad, the Arabs concluded with Walīd ibn al Mughīrah, the staunch enemy of Muhammad, who spoke out without hesitation that "I am the first connoisseur of poetry and letters in Arabia, and I speak with unquestionable authority. This Qur'ān is not the work of humans, nor of *jinn*. It has a very special beauty, a very special ring. It is replete with light and beauty, surpassing every thing known."[38]

The known Egyptian scholar Muḥammad `Abduh, emphasizes the same point arguing that Muhammad's "people used every sort of means, devious and obvious, and their utmost vigor, to crush his message, and give the lie to all he said of God... Muhammad held on his way, discrediting their illusions, exposing their ideas and holding their idols up to scorn. He summoned them to a faith unknown and unheralded in all their time. His only argument on its behalf was to bid them outmatch even the shortest chapter of the Book, or ten chapters. They were free to rally to this task all the learned, eloquent and literary pundits, to their heart's content, in order to rival Muhammad's deliverances and so confounded his case and put him to rout. Yet, as the narratives make very clear, despite the long period in which the challenge lasted and the stubborn hostility in their hearts, the community was completely impotent and unsuccessful. The mighty Book was vindicated as being speech *par excellence*, and its judgments superior to all others. Is not the appearance of such a book, from the lips of an illiterate man, the greatest miracle and clearest evidence that it is not of human origin?"[39]

Professor Gibb observes: "But the Meccans still demanded of him a miracle, and with remarkable boldness and self-confidence Mohammed appealed as the supreme confirmation of his mission to the Koran itself. Like all Arabs they were connoisseurs of language and rhetoric. Well then, if the Koran were his own composition other men could rival it. Let them produce ten verses like it. If they could not (and it is obvious that they could not), then let them accept the Koran as an outstanding evidential miracle."[40] Issa J. Boullata observes, that "The fact that the Qur'ānic challenge *(tahaddi)* has never been taken up successfully, either in Muhammad's lifetime or later on, gave Muslim thinkers cause to consider this as a divine authentication of the Qur'ān and proof of the veracity of his prophethood."[41] M. Khalifa asserts that "Muhammad's contemporary disbelieves insistently dubbed the Qur'ān as "magic" and tried to discourage each other from listening to it lest it might charm them away from their traditional polytheism. But none of them denied its concinnity, excellence and transcendence."[42]

From these historical as well as internal factors, al-Fārūqī concludes, that the Qur'ān is "so beautiful that it is inimitable; it is so inimitable that it is miraculous. It is therefore not the work of humans but of God."[43] Malik Ben Nabi[44] and almost all the Muslim scholars of the Sciences of the Qur'ān, like al-Suyūṭī, al-Zarkashī, Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, Mannā'a al-Qaṭṭān, Zarzūr, Ahmed Van Denffer etc., draw the same conclusions. They accept the Qur'ānic language and style as *mu'jiz* (inimitable) and miraculous.[45] Present literary authorities at al-Azhar University in Cairo have

pinpointed the following areas where, to them, the Qur'ānic style transcends the abilities of mankind and defies imitation:

1: The form of the Qur'ān reflects neither the sedentary softness of the townsmen nor the nomadic roughness of the Bedouins. It posses in right measure the sweetness of the former and the vigor of the latter.
2: The rhythms of the syllables are more sustained than in prose and less patterned than in poetry. The pauses come neither in prose form nor in the manner of poetry but with a harmonious and melodic flow.
3: The sentences are constructed in an elegant manner which uses the smallest number of words, without sounding too brief, to express ideas of utmost richness.
4: The Qur'ānic words neither transgress by their banality nor by their extreme rarity, but are recognized as expressing admirable nobility.
5: The conciseness of expression attains such a striking clarity that the least learned Arabic-speaking person can understand the Qur'ān without difficulty. At the same time there is such a profundity, flexibility, inspiration and radiance in the Qur'ān that it serves as the basis for the principles and rules of Islamic sciences and arts for theology and the juridical schools. Thus, it is almost impossible to express the ideas of the text by only one interpretation, either in Arabic or in any other language even with the greatest care.
6: There is a perfect blend between the two antagonistic powers of reason and emotion, intellect and feeling. In the narrations, arguments, doctrines, laws and moral principles, the words have both persuasive teaching and emotive force. Through the whole Qur'ān the speech maintains its surprising solemnity, power and majesty which nothing can disturb."[46]

S. Hossein Nasr concludes, that there is "in the Qur'ān an incredible eloquence which is the central miracle of Islam, the *balaghah* or eloquence of the Qur'ān having never been matched even by the most eloquent of human beings because of the impossibility of comparing human language with divine language. There is a Divine Presence in the Noble Qur'ān which has transformed Arabic from a human to a sacred language possessing Divine Power so that no human language can ever equate it."[47]

In opposition to this view stands the view of Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām (d. 232/846), one of the Mu'tazilites. He argued that the Qur'ān is not miraculous in its language or style.[48] It is just a scripture like other scriptures containing rules and regulations pertaining to the religious matters. Its miracle, according to al-Nazzām, lies in its reports of the past. Its inimitability lies in *"ṣarfah"* meaning that God averted the attention of the opponents from producing anything like the Qur'ān though they had the ability to do so.[49] This notion was accepted by a few Muslim scholars like Hishām al-Fuwatī (d. 218/833), `Ibbād ibn Sulaymān (3rd/9th century) and al-Rummānī (d.386/996). Some modern Shī'ite scholars like al-Murtaḍā and Dashti, also argue that neither the Qur'ānic Arabic nor the style is miraculous.[50] Ali Dashti, a contemporary Iranian statesman, argues that "The Qor'an contains sentences which are incomplete and not fully intelligible without the aid of commentaries; foreign words, unfamiliar Arabic words, and words used with other than the normal meaning; adjectives and verbs inflected without observance of the concords of gender and number; illogically and ungrammatically applied pronouns which some times have no referent; and predicates which in rhymed passages are often remote from the subjects. These and other such

aberrations in the language have given scope to critics who deny the Qor'an's eloquence."[51] It is pertinent to mention here that a great many scholars have roundly rejected the presence in the Qur'ān of any such linguistic aberrations.[52]

On the other hand, Dasti himself observes that "At the same time the Qor'an is indeed unique and wonderful. There was no precedent for it in the earlier literature of the ancient Arabs."[53] He further observes that "In all fairness the Qor'an is a wonder. Its short *suras* of the Meccan period are charged with expressive force and persuasive power. Its style has no precedent in the Arabic language. Its effusion from the tongue of an illiterate man with no education, let alone literary training, is a phenomenon which, in this respect, can justifiably be described as a miracle."[54] He concludes contending that "Neither the Qora'n's eloquence nor its moral and legal precepts are miraculous. The Qora'n is miraculous because it enabled Mohammad, single-handedly and despite poverty and illiteracy, to overcome his people's resistance and found a lasting religion; because it moved wild men to obedience and imposed its bringer's will on them."[55]

Though scholars, like al-Nazzām, al-Murtaḍa and Dashti, do not deny the divine and miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, they do deny the fact that the miracle lies in its language, beauty or style. Their views were debated and rejected by their own followers. For instance, Al-Nazzām's own student al-Jāḥiẓ and other known Mu`tazilites like al-Qāḍī `Abd al-Jabbār, rejected his views *viz-a-viz* the Qur'ānic i`jāz.[56] Even a modernist like Fazlur Rahman observes that "the question of ideas and doctrines apart, it appears certain that the claim of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān is connected with its linguistic style and expression. Unfortunately, non-Arab Muslims do not realize this enough; while they correctly assume that the Qur'ān is a book of guidance and hence may be understood in any language, they yet not only deprive themselves of the real taste and appreciation for the Qur'ānic expression but-since even a full understanding of the meaning depends upon the linguistic nuances-also cannot do full justice to the content of the Qur'ān."[57]

In the West, there have been several views regarding the origin, nature, style, language and composition of the Qur'ān. Since the advent of Islam until this day, there have always been individuals who have looked at the Qur'ān as the work of an impostor and a collection of fabricated stories and absurdities. The Islam rose from the seventh century Arabian desert and achieved territorial expansions with an unprecedented speed. It overran much of the Christian world of the Middle East as well as some crucial parts of the Church of North Africa just a few years from the death of its founder. This "brilliant success was threatening..."[58] Therefore, opposition and propaganda against Islam and its Prophet became very strong. "Hate and prejudice", observes Emil Dermenghem, "were tenacious of life. From the time of Rudolph de Ludheim (620) until the present, Nichlas de Cuse, Vives, Maracci, Hottinger, Bibliander, Prideaux, etc. present Mohamet as an impostor, Islam as the cluster of all heresies and the work of the devil, the Mussulmans as brutes, and the Koran as a tissue of absurdities."[59] As a result of the Crusade, the tone and words chosen to present Muhammad, the Qur'ān, and its message became increasingly bitter.[60] In the Middle ages the story of "dove" and "bull" became almost the standard interpretation of the Islamic revelation.[61] "One tale", writes K. Armstrong, "spoke of a white bull which had terrorized the population and which finally appeared with the Qur'ān the scripture which Muhammad had brought to the Arabs, floating miraculously between its horns.

Muhammad was also said to have trained a dove to peck peas from his ears so that it looked though the Holy Spirit were whispering into them."[62]

In 1697, at the very beginning of the Enlightenment, two influential books about Islam appeared. Barthelmy d'Herbelot, the author of the first one, described Muhammad with the following words: "This is the famous impostor Mahomet, Author and Founder of a heresy, which has taken on the name of religion, which we call Mohammadan."[63] The same year Humphry Prideaux published his *"Mahomet: The True Nature of Impostor"*. In the age of reason when people were supposedly liberated from dogmatism and crippling religious biases, Prideaux reiterated all the old irrational obsessions of the Middle Ages about Muhammad. He wrote about the Prophet of Islam: "For the first Part of his Life he led a very wicked and licentious Course, much delighting in Rapine, Plunder, and Blood-shed, according to the Usage of the *Arabs*, who mostly followed this kind of Life, being almost continually in Arms one Tribe against another.... His two predominant Passion were *Ambition* and *Lust*. The Course which he took to gain Empire, abundantly shews the former; and the multitude of Women which he had to do with, proves the latter. And indeed these two run through the whole Frame of his *Religion*, there being scarce a Chapter in his *Alcoran*, which doth not lay down some Law of war and Blood-shed for the promoting of the one; or else give some Liberty for use of Women here, or some Promise for the enjoyment of them hereafter, to the gratifying of the other."[64] Even in the eighteenth century, writers like Simon Ockley, George Sale, Voltaire,[65] and historians like Gibbon were still accusing Muhammad of insincerity, ambition and lust. Simon Ockley, for instance, described Muhammad as a "very subtle and crafty man, who put on the appearance only of those good qualities, while the principles of his soul were ambition and lust." [66]

In 1841, Thomas Carlyle took the stand against centuries old stereotypes and fantasies about Muhammad. "For almost the first time", observes Armstrong, "somebody in Europe was trying to see Muhammad as a genuinely religious man."[67] To Carlyle, Muhammad was neither an impostor nor ambitious but, "A silent great soul; he was one of those who cannot but be in earnest; whom Nature herself had appointed to be sincere.... Such sincerity, as we named it, has in very truth something of divine. The word of such a man is a Voice direct from Nature's own Heart.... To be Sheik of Mecca or Arabia, and have a bit of gilt-wood put into your hand,... will that be one's salvation? I decidedly think not. We leave it altogether, this impostor hypothesis, as not credible; not very tolerable even, worthy chiefly of dismissal by us."[68] Many writers followed Carlyle in this regard. E. Renan described Muhammad to be "a man gentle, sensible, faithful, and free from hatred. His affections were sincere; his character in general bent to benevolence... All his conduct gives the lie to the enterprising audacious character which has been commonly attributed to him."[69] Stobart argued that "he was the impostor pictured by some writers is refuted alike by his unswerving belief in the truth of his own mission, by the loyalty and unshaken confidence of his companions, who had ample opportunities of forming a right estimate of his sincerity, and, finally, by the magnitude of the task which he brought to so successful an issue. No impostor, it may safely be said, could have accomplished so mighty a work. No one unsupported by a living faith in the reality of his mission, in the goodness of his cause, could have maintained the same consistent attitude through long years of adverse fortune, alike in the day of victory and the hour of defeat, in the plenitude of his power and at the moment of death."[70]

Despite this drastic change in their attitude towards Muhammad, most Westerners persisted on their old dictum of condemning the Qur'ān, to use Armstrong's words, "as the most boring book in the world."[71] Almost every Western writer held the Qur'ān as the inconsistent, disjointed, and boring composition. Unlike Muslims, they took the Qur'ān as the word of Muhammad and not of God.

Thomas Carlyle himself described the Qur'ān "as toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran."[72] Tor Andrae well summarized the European attitude toward the Qur'ān, observing that, "The eloquence of the Koran has made even less impression on the Occident. Voltaire called it "an incomprehensible book which violates our common sense upon every page", and since Voltaire most European readers have found that the Koran is most boresome reading that can be imagined."[73] Although both Voltaire and Carlyle are reported to have changed later on their views about the Qur'ān,[74] their first dictum has frequently been echoed in many Western writings. For instance, Edward Gibbon described the Qur'ān as "the endless incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea, which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds."[75] John Merrill's observed that "A lack of logical connection in the chapters of the Qur'ān has been felt by many Westerners and has often discouraged them from its perusal."[76] Hartwig Hirschfeld observed that there are "manifold difficulties" in the Qur'ān. These difficulties, argued Hirschfeld, "repel rather than encourage the study of the Qur'ān." [77]

The old biases and stereotypes of the medieval age still surface occasionally in some Evangelical circles. St. Clair-Tisdali contends that "The Qur'ān breathes the air of the desert, it enables us to hear the battle-cries of the Prophet's followers as they rushed to onset, it reveals the working of Muhammad's own mind, and shows the gradual declension of his character as he passed from the earnest and sincere though visionary enthusiast into the conscious impostor and open sensualist."[78] Salomon Reinach claims that "From the literary point of view, the Koran has little merit. Declamation, repetition, puerility, a lack of logic and coherence strike the unprepared reader at every turn. It is humiliating to the human intellect to think that this mediocre literature has been the subject of innumerable commentaries, and that millions of men are still wasting time in absorbing it."[79]

There are several views commonly held about the Qur'ān and its first recipient in the contemporary Western academic circles. W.M. Watt, like many other contemporary Western writers,[80] believes in the utmost sincerity of Muhammad.[81] "Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must in every particular case hold firmly to the belief in his sincerity..."[82] He further observes that "it appears to be certain that he considered himself able to distinguish between revelation and the product of his own consciousness."[83] At another place he observes that "From the first he must have distinguished carefully between what, as he believed, came to him from a supernatural source and the products of his own mind. Just how he made the distinction is not quite clear, but the fact that he made it is as certain as anything in history."[84] He also professes that the Qur'ān contains many divine truths, "I am not a Muslim in the usual sense, though I hope I am a *muslim* as 'one surrendered to God';

but I believe that embedded in the Qur'ān and other expressions of the Islamic vision are vast stores of divine truth from which I and other occidentals have still much to learn."[85] Watt also recognizes the originality[86] and individuality of the Qur'ānic literary nature, "Not merely was it in Arabic language, but in many respects it is typically Arab in its literary form, even though there is no other Arabic literature quite like it."[87]

In spite of all these factors, Watt concludes with other Orientalists that the Qur'ān is a product of Muhammad's creative imagination and that he may have been mistaken in his belief that the Qur'ān was a divine message. "What seems to a man to come from outside himself may actually come from his unconscious."[88] He also observes that the Qur'ānic arrangement is "unsystematic",[89] and that the Qur'ān lacks "sustained composition at any great length."[90] He also declares "disjointedness" as a characteristic of the Qur'ān.[91] Anderson looks at the Qur'ān as "the result of wishful thinking."[92] R. Bell intends to explain the Qur'ānic inconsistency by propounding his "written-document" hypothesis. He presumes that the Prophet wrote his revelations on certain papers and wrote certain other chapters (*suras*) on the back of these sheets of papers, thus allowing for heterogeneous matters being mixed up in the *suras*. From here he concludes that the verses of the Qur'ān got disjointed because they were "wrongly assembled, interrupted or detached." [93] Tor Andrae concludes "However, although certain passages are characterized by genuine beauty of style, it must be admitted that as a whole the Koran can hardly be regarded as fascinating reading."[94] A. S. Tritton observes that "Those, who are not Muslims, cannot endorse these high praises. Even in translation the consecutive reading of several pages of the earlier messages leaves an impression of power. Much of the book is marked by sound common sense, the middle way, for God does not make religion hard for men. Probably this accounts for much of its success."[95] P. Crone and M. Cook, in their controversial book "Hagarism", contend that the Qur'ān is "strikingly lacking in overall structure, frequently obscure and inconsequential in both language and content, perfunctory in its linking of disparate materials, and given to the repetition of whole passages in variant versions."[96] A. Rippin observes that "The text of the Qur'ān presents many ambiguities, difficult words whose precise readings are unsure, problems of textual division and apparently incompatible statements."[97]

Professor Arberry voiced his protest against such a treatment of the Qur'ān by the following words: "Disciples of the Higher Criticism, having watched with fascinated admiration how their masters played havoc with the traditional sacrosanctity of the Bible, threw themselves with brisk enthusiasm into the congenial task of demolishing the Koran.... But having cut to pieces the body of Allāh's revelation, our erudite sleuths have found themselves with a corpse on their hands, the spirit meanwhile eluding their preoccupied attention. So they have been apt to resort to the device of explaining away what they could not explain; crushed between their fumbling fingers, the gossamer wings of soaring inspiration have dissolved into powder. The most extreme representative of this school of thought, which once tyrannized over Koran studies in the West was no doubt the late Dr. Richard Bell." After explaining Bell's hypothesis, Arberry argued, that "Such is the position which the champions of the Higher criticisms of the Koran eventually reach. It is against this excess of anatomical mincing that I argue the unity of the sura and the Koran; instead of offering the perplexed reader *disjecta membra* scattered indifferently over the dissecting table, I ask him to look again at the *cadaver* before it was carved up, and to imagine how it might appear when lifeblood of inspiration flowed through its being. I urge the view that an

eternal composition, such as the Koran is, cannot be well understood if it is submitted to the test of only temporal criticism. It is simply irrelevant to expect that the themes treated in the individual sura will be marshaled after some mathematical precision to form a rationally ordered pattern; the logic of revelation is not the logic of the schoolmen. There is no 'before' or 'after' in the prophetic message, when the message is true, everlasting truth is not held within the confines of time and space but every moment reveals itself wholly and completely."[98]

Many modern Muslim scholars also defend the Qur'ān against the above discussed allegations of disjointedness, lack of overall structure, and ambiguity. Mawdūdī observes, that we need "to be told in advance that this Book is unique in the manner of its composition, in its theme and in its contents and arrangement. We should be forewarned that the concept of a book which we have formed from our previous readings is likely to be a hindrance, rather than a help, towards a deep understanding of the Qur'ān. We should realize that as a first step towards understanding it we must disabuse our minds of all preconceived notions."[99] He argues that the Qur'ānic unity lies in its subject, purpose, and central thesis. The "subject of the Book is Man. Its central theme is that concepts relating to God, the universe and man which have emanated from man's own limited knowledge run counter to reality.... The essence of true knowledge is that which God revealed to man when He appointed him as his vicegerent.... The real object of the Book is to call people to this `right way' and to illuminate God's true guidance, which has often been lost either through man's negligence and heedlessness or distorted by his wicked perversity."[100] Mawdūdī concludes, that "If we study the Qur'ān with these facts in mind it is bound to strike us that the Qur'ān does not deviate one iota from its main subject, its central theme and its basic objective. All the various themes occurring in the Qur'ān are related to the central theme; just as beads of different sizes and colors may be strung together to form a necklace."[101] M.M. Hijāzī emphasizes the "topical unity" in the Qur'ān.[102] He observes that the coherence of the Qur'ān becomes evident when all the Qur'ānic verses on a given subject are brought together and studied in the light of each other. Fazlur Rahman emphasizes the Qur'ānic "cohesive outlook on the universe and life."[103] He argues that the Qur'ānic "teaching has `no inner contradictions' but coheres as a whole."[104] Farāhī observes that each chapter of the Qur'ān revolves around a central theme which he calls "*`Amūd*" meaning pillar or column or hub of the chapter.[105] Iṣlāḥī argues that there is a structural as well as thematic coherence in the Qur'ān.[106] He elaborates upon the concept of "*`Amūd*" as one of the methods of showing unity and coherence in the Qur'ān. Farāhī, Iṣlāḥī, Ṭabāṭabāī and Sayyid Quṭb,[107] all of them try to show that the Qur'ān is not inconsistent or disjointed by emphasizing that "each sura is a thematically complete discourse that has been presented in a coherent structural framework."[108] M. Mir has discussed many of these responses and approaches in details.[109] He, after discussing Iṣlāḥī's work at great length, has concluded that "Iṣlāḥī has convincingly shown-although it is not necessary to agree with all of his conlusions-that the Qur'ān has design and method. He has shown that individual Qur'ānic sūrahs revolve around specific central themes, that an essential complementarity exists between the members of sūrah pairs, and that larger sets of sūrahs, which he calls sūrah groups, display identifiable patterns of *naẓm*. A study of *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān* is bound to leave one with the impression that, contrary to the usually held view, the Qur'ān is a well-ordered book."[110]

The Qur'ān to certain degrees is pedagogically oriented ("*hūdā*" guidance and "*nūr*" light). Therefore, the findings of these modern scholars can possibly be studied and grasped more fully in the light of educational or learning psychology. It has been observed by a number of psychologists that breaking down the topical unites in small subunites (multiple discrimination) and presenting these subunites over specific intervals and by a variety of methods, makes understanding, assimilation, and retention of the material so presented easy.[111] The Qur'ānic disjointedness, so to speak, can be understood and appreciated in this sense. The repetitive material of the Qur'ān can also be interpreted in the light of what the psychologists call the process of "*shaping*" through the "*schedules of reinforcement*".[112] "The behavior is shaped through a series of successive approximations to the desired behavior, each made possibly by selectively reinforcing certain responses and not others. Thus behavior gradually is brought closer and loser to the desired pattern."[113] The Qur'ān, it can be argued, uses a kind of *fixed* as well as *variable interval schedules of reinforcement*. Through these constant reinforcements or repetitions, the Qur'ān intends to bring the reader closer and closer to the desired pattern and goal.

It may take to understand and comprehended the Qur'ānic discourse of the universe and reality to appreciate these repetitions and topical variety of the Qur'ān, that, in the end, leads to a unity of pattern and goal. Sachiko Murata and W. C. Chittick argue that, "For Westerners, the Koran is an extremely difficult text to appreciate, especially in translation. Even for those who have spent enough years studying the Arabic language to read the original, the Koran may appear as disorderly, inaccurate, and illogical. However, there is enough evidence provided by Islamic civilization itself, and by the great philosophers, theologians, and poets who have commented on the text, to be sure that the problem lies on the side of the reader, not the book. The text is undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary ever put down on paper. Precisely because it is extraordinary, it does not follow people's expectations as to what a book should be."[114] They further argue that "It is true that the Koran's view of things has a deep kinship with both the Jewish and the Christian world views, but most people in the modern world have little understanding of those world views either. Simply attending synagogue, church, or mosque does not mean that one sees things differently from contemporary atheists. Our culture's dominant ways of thinking are taught to us not in our places of worship, but in our media and educational institutions. We may like to think that our education is scientific and unbiased, but this is a highly biased judgment, as many contemporary thinkers and social critics have told us. As a rule, it seems, when people with no grounding in the Islamic world view pick up a translation of the Koran, they have their prejudices confirmed, whatever these may be. No real entrance into the Koranic view of things is possible without some idea of the type of thinking that infuses the text. And that thinking is foreign to the way that we are taught to think in our own culture and modern education in general."[115]

M. Khalifa emphasizes the difference between the Arabic and the English languages to "understand the frustration of someone who struggles through the Qur'ān with a limited knowledge of Arabic".[116] To him "It is as if a young boy whose knowledge of diamond was limited to viewing them in a jeweler's window, were then to set himself up as an authority on discerning the delicate variations between different stones."[117]

There is a third group of Westerners, whose views about the language, composition and impact of the Qur'ān, come very close to the Muslim's views regarding these issues. Goethe's famous comment on the Qur'ānic style was, "As often as we approach it, it always proves repulsive anew, gradually, however, it attracts, it astonishes and in the end it forces admiration."[118] H. A. R. Gibb, commenting on Carlyle's statement that the Qur'ān is "as toilsome reading as I ever undertook", writes, "But years of close study confirm his further judgment that in it 'there is a merit quite other than the literary one. If a book come from the heart, it will contrive to reach other hearts; all art and authorcraft are of small account to that.' Though, to be sure, the question of literary merit is one not to be judged on a *proiri* grounds but in relation to the genius of the Arabic language; and no man in fifteen hundred years has ever played on that deep-toned instrument with such power, such boldness, and such range of emotional effect as Mohammed did."[119]

Emil Derenghem observes that "Its literary beauty, its irradiation, an enigma even to-day, have the power of putting those who recite it into a state of fervor, even if they are the least pious."[120] Sale observes that the Qur'ān "is confusedly of the utmost elegance and purity of language,... to its miracle did Mohammad chiefly appeal for the confirmation of his mission, publicly challenging the most eloquent men in Arabia--which was at that time stocked with thousands whose sole study and ambition was to excel in elegance of style and composition--to produce a single chapter that might be compared with it." He further observes that "The Style of the Qur'ān is beautiful, it is adorned with bold figures after the Eastern taste, enlivened with florid and sententious expressions and in many places where the majesty and attributes of God are described, sublime and magnificent."[121] K. W. Morgan observes that "The Qur'ān succeeded so well in captivating the minds of the audience that several of the opponents thought it the effect of witchcraft and enchantment."[122] J. A. William observes that "The Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic. It is a matter of faith in Islam that since it is of Divine origin it is inimitable, and since to translate is always to betray, Muslims have always deprecated and at times prohibited any attempt to render it in another language. Anyone who has read it in the original is forced to admit that this caution seems justified; no translation, however faithful to the meaning, has ever been fully successful. Arabic when expertly used is remarkably terse, rich and forceful language, and the Arabic of the Qur'ān is by turns striking, soaring, vivid, terrible, tender and breathtaking.... It is meaningless to apply adjectives such as "beautiful" or "persuasive" to the Qur'ān; its flashing images and inexorable measures go directly to the brain and intoxicate it."[123]

In regards to the translation of the Qur'ān, John Naish observed that "The Qur'ān in its original Arabic dress has a seductive beauty and charm of its own. Couched in concise and exalted style, its brief pregnant sentences, often rhymed, poses an expressive force and explosive energy which it is extremely difficult to convey by literal word by word translation."[124] K. Armstrong observed that "In the case of the Qur'ān there is also the problem of translation. The most beautiful lines of Shakespeare frequently sound banal in another language because little of the poetry can be conveyed in a foreign idiom; and Arabic is a language that is specially difficult to translate. Arabs point out that they find translations of poems or stories they have enjoyed in the original Arabic unrecognizable in another tongue. There is something about Arabic which is incommunicable in another idiom: even the speeches of Arab politicians sound stilted, artificial and alien in an English translation. If this is true of ordinary Arabic, of mundane utterance or conventional literature, it is doubly true of the Qur'ān which is written in highly complex, dense and allusive language. Even

Arabs who speak English fluently have said that when they read the Qur'ān in an English translation, they feel that they are reading an entirely different book."[125] R.V.C. Bodley observed that "In addition to its delivery and its subject, it depends a great deal on its phraseology.... the Koran lose its inspiring rhythm when taken out of Arabic."[126]

Arnold Hottinger observes that "If one wishes to understand it properly one must first of all take into account that the language of the Koran is not only good Arabic, but, in the opinion of nearly every Arab, it is the best Arabic that one could possibly imagine. As a model for every Arab writer it has never been equaled (nor, according to dogma, can it ever be equaled). There is one whole class of literature, the books on Ijaz, which is wholly concerned with proving this point. It analyses the prose of the Koran and compares its beauties with those of the Arab poets and thereby reaches the conclusion that the Koran is unsurpassable." He further observes that "The Egyptian 'modernistic' Professor Taha Hussain, who was educated in Paris and is well known as a contemporary critic and writer says: 'There are three sorts of literary speech; poetry, prose and the Koran.' Even to his critical mind, which is inclined to consider the whole corpus of poetry attributed to heathen times as forgeries, the Koran is a work with which no other literary monument can be compared."[127]

About its impact, long ago Johnson wrote: "If it is not poetry-and it is hard to say whether it be or not,-it is more than poetry. It is not history, nor biography. It is not anthology, like the Sermon on the Mount; nor metaphysical dialects, like the Buddhist Sutras; nor sublime homiletics like Plato's conferences of the wise and foolish teachers. It is a prophet's cry, Semitic to the core; yet of a meaning so universal and so timely that all the voices of the age take it up, willing or unwilling, and it echoes over palaces and deserts, over cities and empires, first kindling its chosen hearts to world-conquest, then gathering itself up into a reconstructive force that all the creative light of Greece and Asia might penetrate the heavy gloom of Christian Europe, when Christianity was but the Queen of Night."[128] Hitti observed: "Its length is four-fifths that of the New Testament in Arabic. The religious influence it exercises as the basis of Islam and the final authority in matters spiritual and ethical are only part of the story. Theology, jurisprudence and science being considered by Moslems as different aspects of one and the same thing, the Koran becomes the scientific manual, the textbook, for acquiring a liberal education.... Its literary influence may be appreciated when we realize that it was due to it alone that the various dialects of the Arabic-speaking peoples have not developed into distinct languages. While today an Iraqi may find it a little difficult fully to understand the speech of a Moroccan, he would have no difficulty in understanding his written language, since in both Iraq and Morocco--as well as in Syria, Arabia, Egypt--the classical language modeled by the Koran is followed closely everywhere. At the time of Muhammad there was no work of the first order in Arabic prose. The Koran was therefore the earliest, and has ever since remained the model prose work. Its language is rhythmical and rhetorical, but not poetical. Its rhymed prose has set the standard which almost every conservative Arabic writer today consciously strives to imitate."[129] Bodley observed: "This Book transformed the simple shepherds, the merchants and nomads of Arabia into worriers and empire builders." [130]

Such remarks when joined with several others like that of Lamartine,[131] A. J. Toynbee,[132] Hans Kung,[133] J. Espisito and P.K. Hitti,[134] get very close to the impressions one gets from the traditional Islamic views about the nature of the Qur'ān though not implying precisely the same

high praises. The fact of the matter is, that the Qur'ān was revealed in the first place to the Arabs of the seventh century to be read, recited, and practiced. Therefore, an extensive knowledge of the classical Arabic is essential to appreciate the style, beauty and composition of the Qur'ān. This is what a European convert to Islam and a modern scholar on the Qur'ān, Mohammad Asad, recognizes: "since the Arabic of the Qur'ān is a language which attained to its maturity in the Arabia of fourteen centuries ago, it follows that in order to grasp its spirit correctly, on must be able to feel and hear this language as the Arabs felt and heard at the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed, and to understand the meaning which they gave to the linguistic symbols in which it is expressed."[135] He further observes that "the non-Arab who becomes acquainted with Arabic only at a mature age, in result of a conscious effort, that is, through study: for, what he acquires is but a ready-made, outward structure devoid of that intangible quality of ellipticism which gives to the Arabic idiom its inner life and reality."[136] He argues that "familiarity with the Bedouin speech of Central and Eastern Arabia-in addition, of course, to academic knowledge of classical Arabic-is the only way for a non-Arab of our time to achieve an intimate understanding of the diction of the Qur'ān."[137]

It does not mean, however, that one needs to learn all these subtleties of the Arabic language to understand the message of the Qur'ān. The message is simple and easy to grasp in any other language and translation. It is the apprehension of the literary style, beauty, and composition of the Qur'ān that requires acquaintance with these delicacies of the classical Arabic language. Once a person gets acquainted with these literary devices and subtleties of the Arabic language along with a working knowledge of the other related Islamic sciences, it may become easy for him to appreciate the aesthetic and rhetorical features of the Qur'ān. He may then conclude with Arthur J. Arberry that "The complex prosody, a rich repertory of subtle and complicated rhythms had been completely perfected. A vocabulary of themes, images and figures, extensive but nevertheless circumscribed, was firmly established."[138] Arberry observes that the richly varied rhythms of the Qur'ān and its message constitute its "undeniable claim to rank amongst the greatest literary masterpieces of mankind."[139] He further observes that "This very characteristic feature-"that inimitable symphony", as the believing Pickthall described his Holy Book, "the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy"-has been almost totally ignored by previous translators."[140]

Therefore, the remarks and claims of non-Muslim readers that the Qur'ān is a "crude", "toilsome", and "incoherent rambling" may be understood and explained away in light of the above mentioned factors and realities. It may be appropriate here to conclude with Charles J. Adams that "The study of the Qur'ān for its own sake as the basic document of the Islamic community must now be fostered and encouraged, and study of this kind stands in the first rank of importance for the deepened understanding of Islam as a religion."[141] There have been such attempts made by various scholars like Toshihiko Izutsu,[142] Kenneth Cragg,[143] Fazlur Rahamn,[144] and especially by Angelika Neuwirth and Pierre Crapon de Caprona.[145] A. Neuwirth, after studying oath clusters in Meccan *suras,* concluded: " 'The book' is thus the only relic from among a complex ensemble of manifold `accessories of revelation', originally comprising cosmic, vegetative, topographic, cultic and social elements. The book as the symbol of revelation *per excellence* thus acquires even in early Makkan times the dignity which it has preserved until the present day: to represent the noblest emblem of Islamic religion."[146] Only after such attempts and fresh approaches, argues Issa J. Boullata, "the

idea if i`jāz, among other things, be better apprehended and its function in the Islamic faith be more fully appreciated."[147]

Unlike the present day Bible, the Qur'ān was sanctified, recorded, carefully preserved, and canonized from its inception.[148] W. A. Graham rightly observes that "the concept of a canon of scriptures collected over times as a part of the ongoing record of God's dealing with His people is peculiar to Jews and Christians and distinguishes their concept of what scripture as Divine Word means from that of Muslims. For the latter, revelation was sent one final time, in the course of one prophetic career during which and immediately afterward it was collected into book form. The collected text, as God's direct Speech, has been explicitly recognized as scripture since the actual time in which it "came down." Of a process of canonization Muslims know nothing analogous to that of Jewish and Christian scripture."[149] The Muslim sources agree that the Qur'ānic text was fully memorized and put into some written forms during the lifetime of the Prophet.[150] At the end of his life, writes al-Farūqi, "Muhammad had about 30,000 contemporaries who had heard and memorized the Qur'ān in whole or in part. Several of them could read and write and had committed the Qur'ān to writing in part or in toto. Certainly, writing material were crude: leather, bones stone or wood, cloth, and papyrus."[151] The fact that Prophet Muhammad was conscious of the divine nature and otherness of the Qur'ān from the very beginning, is well attested by the historical facts and is recognized by the Western scholars.[152] To A. Guillaume, "It is beyond doubt that his hearers recognized the symptoms of revelation, otherwise his *obiter dicta* which the literature of tradition purports to record would be included in the Qur'ān."[153] The Western scholars of Islam also agree that the Prophet's followers committed the text of the Qur'ān to their memory as was the case with most of the literary works in Arabia.[154] Gatje observes that "Muhammad seems to have begun quite early the practice of reciting passages from the Qur'ān to his followers for as long as necessary until they knew them by heart. This type of transmission had its model in the propagation of ancient Arabic poetry."[155] It may suffice to quote here Sir William Muir, a resolute Christian missionary,[156] who observes that, "The divine revelation was the corner-stone of Islam. The recital of a passage from it formed an essential part of daily prayer public and private; and its perusal and repetition were enforced as a duty and a privilege fraught with religious merit. This is the universal voice of early tradition, and may be gathered also from the revelation itself. The Coran was accordingly committed to memory more or less by every adherent of Islam, and the extent to which it could be recited was one of the chief distinctions of nobility in the early Muslim empire. The custom of Arabia favored the task... The recollective faculty was thus cultivated to the highest pitch; and it was applied, with all the ardor of an awakened spirit, to the Coran. Such was the tenacity of their memory, and so great their power of application, that several of Mahomet's followers, according to early tradition, could, during his life-time, repeat with scrupulous accuracy the entire revelation."[157]

It is also recognized by the Orientalists that the writing skill was common in the metropolitan town of Makka due to its mercantile atmosphere. Mecca, says Watt, "was a mercantile town, dependent on its trade for its very existence, and in regular communication with regions where writing was commonly used. The Meccan merchants must have kept some record of their transactions, and it may be assumed that writing was well enough known there."[158] That Muhammad used secretaries to write down the revelation, is also well attested historically and is recognized by the Western scholarship.[159] Gatje observes that "Muhammad also probably dictated

connected sections of the revelation to be written down even before his departure for Medinah."[160] Watt quotes several traditional stories to conclude: "it shows that some revelation had been written down by the middle of the Meccan period."[161] W. Muir observes that "Besides the reference in the Coran to its own existence in a written form, we have express mention made in the authentic traditions of Omar's conversion, of a copy of the 20th Sura being used by his sister's family for social and private devotional reading. This refers to a period preceding, by three or four years, the emigration to Medina. If transcripts of the revelations were made, and in common use, at that early time when the followers of Islam were few and oppressed, it is certain that they must have multiplied exceedingly when the Prophet came to power, and his Book formed the law of the greater part of Arabia."[162] It is true, observes Watt, that "After Muhammad went to Medina his employment of secretaries is well attested. Among those used for the writing down of revelations were `Uthman, Mu`awiya, Ubayy ibn-Ka`b, Zayd ibn-Thabit and `Abd-Allah ibn-Abi-Sarh."[163]

From the above mentioned facts and other related authentic traditions,[164] Muslim scholars conclude that the entire text of the Qur'ān was written down in some shape or form in the life time of the Prophet. They also "unanimously hold that Muhammad himself was responsible for the arrangement of the verses in suras..."[165] For instance a modern scholar of Islam, M. Ali, observes that "Though the Holy Qur'ān was revealed in portions, yet it is a mistake to suppose that it remained long in that fragmentary condition. As its very name implies, it was a book from the first, and though it could not be complete until the last verse was revealed, it was never without some form of arrangement. There is the clearest testimony, internal as well as external, that every single verse or part of a verse and every chapter that was revealed had its own definite place in the Holy Book."[166] He quotes various traditions and incidents to further argue that "In fact, if we bear in mind the use that was made of the Holy Qur'ān, we can not for an instant entertain the idea that the Holy Qur'ān existed without any arrangement of its verse and chapters in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. It was not only recited in prayers but committed to memory and regularly recited to keep it fresh in the mind. Now if an arrangement of verses and chapters had not existed, it would have been clearly impossible either to recite it in public prayers or to commit it to memory. The slightest change in the place of a verse by an Imam leading the prayers would at once call forth correction from the audience, as it does at the present day."[167]

Many Western scholars, like Muir, Burton and Smith agree with these conclusions. Muir, for instance, writes, "However retentive the Arab memory, we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source. But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Coran, or nearly the whole, were made by Mahomet's followers during his life. Writing was without doubt generally known at Mecca long before Mahomet assumed the prophetical office. Many of his followers are expressly mentioned as employed by the Prophet at Medina in writing his letters or dispatches... The ability thus existing, it may be safely inferred that the verses which were so indefatigably committed to memory, would be likewise committed carefully to writing."[168] Burton also concludes that the present text of the Qur'ān was organized by the Prophet himself. The present text, Burton observes, "is none other than the unique text of the revelations whose existence all their tricks betoken, the text which has come down to us in the form in which it was organized and approved by the Prophet."[169] K. Cragg observes that "there is no place for serious misgiving that what is

here was substantially what the Prophet said or that what he said under conditions of Qur'ānic inspiration is not here."[170]

Other Orientalists, like Watt, Tritton, Gibb, hold that the Qur'ān was partially and not entirely written down in the lifetime of the Prophet. Watt says that "much of the Qur'ān was written down in some form during Muhammad's lifetime."[171] A. Guillaume observes that "There is no doubt that at the death of Muhammad a good deal of the Qur'ān was already written down, though not all of it, for while he was alive new suras or chapters were constantly being added."[172] A. S. Tritton concludes that "The Koran contains the revelations given to Muhammad. These had not been collected during his lifetime though partial collections had been made. A definitive collection was begun during the reign of his successor and this was revised during the reign of Uthman; there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the result."[173]

It is pertinent to mention here that Abū Bakr (632-634), who succeeded Muhammad (who died in 632), ordered collection of the written material in one volume after `Umar urged him to do so. The massacre of Yamāma claimed lives of many of the memorizers (*Ḥuffāẓ*) and reciters of the Qur'ān.[174] Scholars like Gibb, Watt, and Burton, have critically examined various traditions *viz-a-viz* who started the work of collection in the first place.[175] They believe, as Watt have expressed, that the traditions are "open to criticism on a number of grounds."[176] Still they reach the same conclusion that it was a careful, sincere and scholarly collection of what was recorded in the lifetime of the Prophet.[177] Burton, for instance, observes that, "The task, whoever first accomplished it, was merely one of assembling the Qur'ān which already in the lifetime of the Prophet was recorded in writing. Abu Bakr's contribution was to arrange for the transfer of these sheets, then scattered about Medina, into a single volume."[178] It was Zaid ibn Thābit, the secretary of the Prophet, who headed the commission and did the job for Abū Bakr. "The original copy, observes Sir W. Muir, "prepared by Zeid was probably kept by Abū Bakr during the short remainder of his reign. It then came into the possession of Omar who... committed it to the custody of his daughter Haphsa, the Prophet's widow. The compilation of Zeid, as embodied in this exemplar, continued during Omar's ten years' Caliphate to be the standard and authoritative text."[179]

Uthmān (644-656), who succeeded `Umar, ordered the same Zaid to write down a single text in accordance with the standard Makkan dialect. The conversion of masses of non-Arab people and also non-Peninsular Arabs caused a variety of expression in the modes of recitation of the Qur'ānic text which itself did allow various variant readings since the time of the Prophet, as we will see in the coming pages.[180] Alarmed with the diversity, Uthmān ordered recension of the Qur'ānic text to one standard text and ordered others to be burnt.[181] These burnt pre-Uthmanic codices of, for instance, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ūd (died around 653), Ubayy ibn Ka`b (died around 639 or later), Abū Mūsa al-Ash`arī (died 662 or later), and Miqdād ibn `Amr (died 653), with the exception of a few variant readings, observes Gatje, "had the same suras as the Uthmanic Qur'ān, although in somewhat different orders."[182] After critically examining the traditions about these codices, Professor Watt concludes that "on the whole the information which has reached us about the pre-Uthmanic codices suggests that there was no great variation in the actual contents of the Qur'ān in the period immediately after the Prophet's death. The order of the suras was apparently

not fixed, and there were many slight variations in reading; but of other differences there is no evidence."[183]

We may agree here with Muir who observes that "We may then safely conclude that Othman's recension was, what it professed to be, namely, the reproduction of Abu Bakr's edition, with a more perfect conformity to the dialect of Mecca, and possibly a more uniform arrangement of the component parts-but still a faithful reproduction."[184] This Uthmanic text, observes Burton, "had been arrived at only after the most rigorous inquires by the commission appointed for the purpose by the Head of State. We have seen something of the scholarly caution with which the commission had approached its sacred task, including in the completed draft only what it had no human reason to doubt had come down from the direct instruction of the Prophet via the most veracious witnesses."[185] Gibb concludes that "it seems reasonably well established that no material changes were introduced and that the original form and contents of Mohammed's discourses were preserved with scrupulous precision."[186] K. Cragg observes that "the consensus of view-Shi'ahs excepted-is that the Qur'ān as it stood in `Uthman's recension omits no significant and includes no extraneous material. The Prophet's death had decisively closed the Book."[187] Therefore, within a short span of 12 years after the departure of the Prophet as al-Fārūqī contends,[188] or about 18 years as Watt argues,[189] a standard, complete, written codices of the Qur'ān was officially published and made available along with the expert teachers to the metropolitan cities of the empire.[190] Al-Fārūqī observes that "several copies were made and distributed. One of these old copies is extant and is kept in Bukhara. Except for the diacritical marks and some improvements of orthography and calligraphy, the Qur'ān extant in every Muslim home around the world today, or kept and recited from memory by the millions, is identical to the material that was recited and conveyed by the Prophet to his companions fourteen centuries ago."[191]

John Wansbrough, a contemporary Reader in Arabic at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, have written two controversial books in an effort to deny the existence of the Qur'ān in the life of Prophet Muhammad or before the end of the second/eighth century. Charles Adam once summed up his views regarding the research work done in connection with the Qur'ān, in the following words: "Such matters as the formation of the Qur'ān text, the chronology of the materials assembled in the text, the history of the text, variant readings, the relationship of the Qur'ān to prior literature, and a host of other issues of this kind have been investigated thoroughly."[192] Refuting all these conventional Islamic as well as Western scholars' conclusions, Wansbrough, in the opinion of Andrew Rippin "has made it clear that we have really only scratched the surface of these studies."[193] Wansbrough, following Geza Vermes[194] and Raphael Loewe's treatment of the Bible, has applied the 'literary' method of the biblical criticism to do a form-critical analysis of the Qur'ānic text and has reached a very unusual conclusion. He has isolated four major features of the Qur'ānic message i.e. divine retribution, sign, exile, and covenant, all four from the "traditional stock of monotheistic imagery."[195] These motifs, Wansbrough observed, were "repeatedly signaled but seldom developed"[196] in the Qur'ān. From here he has reached his significant insight that the Qur'ān has a "referential" style.[197] He has given example of the story of Joseph and his brothers, narrated in sura 12:59 of the Qur'ān, to elaborate his point that the Qur'ān presumes its audience to fill in the missing details of the narratives.[198] This referential character of the Qur'ān, to Wansbrough, is a key to understand that the Qur'ān is not an exclusively Arabian book and that it should not be detached from its

Judeo-Christian background.[199] It was, argued Wansbrough, produced in an atmosphere of intense Judeo-Christian sectarian debate and was a composite work of "variant traditions."[200]

The emphasis upon Judeo-Christian background of the Qur'ān is an old hypothesis and has been repeatedly mentioned by many Western writers. J. Wellhausen, R. Bell,[201] Tor Andrae, S. Zwemer,[202] Menzes,[203] Gardner,[204] Margoliouth,[205] Torrey,[206] Goitein,[207] W. Ahrens, Anderson, Rodinson, and Jeffery are just a few examples. Wellhausen, Bell, Andrae and Ahrens advocated Christian Aramaic background to the Qur'ānic text, while H. Hirschfeld, D. Kuenstlinger, R. Lesczynsky, H. Speyer, Anderson, C. Torrey, A. Geiger, and Katsh, claimed the Jewish foundations of Islam. Anderson, for instance, claimed that "The long rambling accounts of Jewish patriarchs and prophets [in the Qur'ān] correspond in so much detail with the Talmud that of their essentially Jewish origin there can be no doubt."[208] Gieger concluded that "Muhammad had appropriated much from Jewish sources by means of oral communication, frequently without being aware of the differences between sacred text and later embellishments or exegetical comment, between primary biblical and post-biblical materials."[209]

On the other hand, Bell himself recognized that "Of any intimate knowledge for the Prophet of either these two religions or the Bible itself there is no convincing evidence."[210] M. Khalifa argues that "about two thirds of it [the Qur'ān] was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet migrated to Medina,..."[211] J. Fueck observes that " There is no evidence for the existence of a strong Jewish colony with a living tradition at Mecca, nor does Qur'ān give evidence of that intimate knowledge of Jewish matters which we would expect if Muhammad had actually been dependent on Judaism."[212] Ahrens argued that Muhammad "during the greater part of the Meccan period...was predominantly dependent upon Christians in the formulation of his doctrines."[213] He also claimed that Muhammad compromised the best of those principles that had been drawn from Christianity because of political opportunism. Fueck, refuting these allegations, argues: "How, we ask, is it possible for a gang leader who supposedly had no scruples against using whatever means were available to achieve his goals, who carried out "general massacre," and who "took delight in enemies slain," to exert such influence on world history that 1300 years after his death over three hundred million persons confess their faith in him? The witness of many centuries of history and the witness today of an Islam that is still vigorous refute more conclusively than any other argument the judgments that Ahrens expressed on the basis of a flawed interpretation."[214] Fueck further argues, that the concept of cyclical revelation is intrinsic to Muhammad's prophetic consciousness. "This cyclical theory of revelation cannot be derived either from Judaism or from Christianity. The idea as such has parallels in gnosticism and especially in the thought of Mani, but with no evidence to date indicating any direct historical connection. However, the special form of this doctrine as it appears in the Qur'ān, particularly the inclusion of early Arabian prophets, seems to be Muhammad's own creation. It reflects his philosophy of history and indicates how he understood his relationship to other peoples who had previously received a divine revelation. It is convincing evidence that Muhammad could not have received the decisive stimulus to prophetic action from either Jews or Christians."[215]

The presence in the Qur'ān of many biblical stories is often cited as a proof of Muhammad's dependence upon the Christian and Jewish sources. The student of both the Qur'ān and the Bible can easily notice the difference in many details regarding these stories as well as the point of

emphasis in them. The Qur'ān does not give a detailed account of all the previous prophets. "Of some messengers We have already told thee the story; of others we have not" (al-Qur'ān 4:164) Those prophets whose stories are mentioned, not much historical details are given about them. On the other hand, the Qur'ān focuses mostly upon the lessons, glad tidings, warnings, explanation of the Islamic doctrines, and consoling the Prophet through these stories. "All that We relate to thee of the stories of the messengers, with it We make firm thy heart: in them there cometh to thee the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe." (11:120) The Qur'ānic emphasis is the moral and spiritual lessons one should get from these stories. None of the immoralities attributed to various individuals in the Bible, like Lot (Genesis 19:30-38), David (II Samuel 11:1-27), Solomon (I Kings 11:1-10) etc., are mentioned in the Qur'ānic stories. Contrary to that, the Qur'ān vindicates these individuals, purges their personalities and characters of indecencies, obscenities, and all kinds of moral and spiritual defects.[216] The Qur'ān presents them as the prophets and messengers of God, the infallible human beings, who were embodiments and walking pictures of submission to the will of God and His commandments.[217]

A. H. Johns observes, that "It is often overlooked that the Qur'ān is *par excellence* a story book, and that it teaches through its stories. Notwithstanding its central position as a source of law, its eschatological warnings, its dialogues with Muhammad, a major part of it consists of stories of the prophets before Muhammad that provide his role models and that justify his claim to be a prophet, stories that comfort him for the pain that the insults of his enemies caused him, but which, at the same time, have as a goal the teaching of the central doctrines of Islam: the unity of God, the sending of the prophets, and the resurrection of the dead. The genius of qur'anic story-telling often passes unrecognized by Western scholars, who tend to see these stories only in relation to their biblical counterparts, despite the brilliance of their presentation, and the life they have taken on in retellings that have an appeal for all levels of society."[218] Watt observes that "there is something original in the Qur'ān's use of the stories and in its selection of points for emphasis."[219] To Watt, "Its originality consists in that it gave them greater precision and detail, presented them more forcefully and by its varying emphasis, made more or less coherent synthesis of them; above all, it gave them a focus in the person of Muhammad and his special vocation as messenger of God. Revelation and prophethood are certainly Judeo-Christian ideas; to say `God is revealing Himself through Muhammad', however, is no mere repetition of the past, but part of a creative irruption."[220]

Moreover, as Fueck observes, that "within the framework of Qur'ānic revelation the biblical stories play only a subordinate role as illustrative material and may in no way be used as proof that the Prophet was dependent on Jews or Christians for the essential points of his religion. How little that was actually the case and how modest was Mohammad's knowledge of the earlier religions of revelation is shown most clearly in his naive hope that he would be recognized as a prophet by Jews and Christians. Indeed, it appears to me that it was the discovery of a substantive correspondence between his own preaching and what Christians and Jews found in their sacred books that first motivated him to concern himself more directly with their tradition, for it is the second Meccan period that first reflects an extensive knowledge of biblical stories."[221] Watt observes that "There is no great difficulty in claiming that the precise form, the point and the ulterior significance of the stories came to Muhammad by revelation and not from the communications of his alleged informant."[222] In addition to that, if Muhammad had borrowed the

material from the Christian or the Jews, argues Khalifa, "He could never have preached a faith so radically different from Christianity and Judaism, particularly with respect to their basic creeds."[223] Considering the hostile climate and antagonism that existed between him and his adversaries, "particularly the Jews and polytheists, his teacher's name could scarcely have remained unknown throughout all the years of the Prophet's mission."[224]

The Qur'ān informs, that similar accusations of borrowing and learning from others were reiterated by Meccan elite, "But the Misbelievers say: "Naught is this but a lie which he has forged, and others have helped him at it." In truth it is they who have put forward an iniquity and a falsehood. And they say: "Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated to him morning and evening." (25:4-5) The Meccans also used to mention certain individuals as Muhammad's teachers, as the Qur'ān states: "And we know well that they say: Only a man teaches him. The speech of him at whom they falsely hint is outlandish and this is manifest Arabic speech." (16:103) Mawdūdī explains this verse observing: "These are reports which mention different names. These were the Makkan unbelievers who were suspected of being the true source of the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In one of the reports, the name of the person mentioned is Jabr who was a Roman slave of 'Amir ibn al-Hadrami. In another report, the name mentioned is 'A'ish or Ya'ish, a slave of Huwaytib ibn 'Abd al-Uzza. Another report mentions Yasar, a Jew, whose agnomen (*kunyah*)- was Abu Fukayhah, and who was the slave of a Makkan woman. Still another report mentions someone by the name of Bal'an or bal'am, a Roman slave. Be that as it may, the unbelievers of Makka formed their judgment on the basis of one simple thing. They tried to find out who, among the acquaintances of the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew about the Torah and the Gospels. They needed to know nothing else about the person to be able to declare that he was the real author of the Qur'ān, a Book which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ascribed to God."[225]

In modern times, Menezes and Gardner have repeated the same accusation by naming Salman, a Persian convert, as the chief help of the Prophet in the Qur'ānic composition.[226] Although Salman only met the Prophet in Medina. As mentioned earlier, the greater part of the Qur'ān was revealed in Mecca and most of these stories were revealed in the later part of Meccan period. Therefore, in view of these historical facts, the Prophet could not have learned these stories from Salman. Moreover, it would have been difficult to make such a devoted follower out of Salman as he was or any other person from whom Muhammad would have learned or borrowed the material. Consequently, any attempt to prove Muhammad's dependence upon the Jewish or Christian sources, argues Fueck, "leads inevitably to insoluble difficulties and contradictions."[227] The Muslims explain the similarities between the biblical and qur'ānic stories claiming that the source of both the scriptures is one, i.e. the revelation from Almighty God. In view of such a claim, these similarities are neither unusual nor impossible. The Muslims also explain the differences as the result of changes and insertions that, to them, took place in the biblical narration.

In addition to arguing about the Judeo-Christian background of the Qur'ān, Wansbrough contends that the Qur'ān was post-Muhammad. Wansbrough argues that "The polemical use of `scripture' as testimonial, dominant in the *sira-maghazi* literature, was never entirely abandoned. It is, however, worth recalling that those sources which may with some assurance be dated before the end of the second /eighth century (and thus before Ibn Ishaq) contain-no reference to Muslim

scripture. A possible exception might be the much cited and recently disputed chapter of John Damascene's *De Haeresibus.* I am myself disposed to accept Abel's arguments for later compilation and pseudepigraphy, but were the document authentic it could anyway not be adduced as evidence for a canonical text of Muslim scripture."[228] He connects the canonization and stabilization of the Qur'ānic text with formation of the community,[229] and argues that "Upon the vexed question of a Vorlag for Ghevond text of the alleged correspondence between Leo III and `Umar b. `Abd al-`Aziz I am unable to offer an opinion, though it is of some interest to note that connection of a composition/redaction of the Qur'ān with the figure of Hajjaj b. Yusuf, included in both the Risala of `abd al-Masih Kindi and the `Jerusalem dispute' ascribed to one Ibrahim Taberani, is also found there. That motif, as well as several others in the same correspondence, was characteristic of polemical literature not in the first/seventh but in the third/ninth century. Its point would seem to be quarrel about the authenticity of a Muslim scripture, in the sense of valid suppression of the Biblical dispensations. On the other hand, the witness of both the Patriarch Timotheos and of the Christian tract contained in Heilelberg Papyrus 438, possibly contemporary with the author of *sira* (d. 151/768), might reflect the circumstances obtaining within the Muslim community."[230] Therefore, the text of the Qur'ān, to Wansbrough, was post-Muhammad. It resulted from the stabilization of the political power by the end of second/eighth century and not an outcome of Muhammad's discourses.[231]

Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, in their controversial book "Hagarism", adopt the same theory without any further inquiry or question. They confess to owe their views regarding the Qur'ān to Wansbrough. They conclude that "There is no hard evidence for the existence of the Koran in any way before the last decade of the seventh century, and the tradition which places this rather opaque revelation in its historical context is not attested before the middle of the eighth."[232] They seem to deny even the historical existence of Muhammad. They take the Qur'ān and the entire set of the Islamic teachings as a conspiracy and fabrication of somewhat mysterious "Hagarenes". Emphasizing that the Hagarenes invented their prophet, they argue that "Where the Hagarenes had to fend for themselves was in composing an actual sacred book for their prophet, less alien than that of Moses and more real than that of Abraham. No early source sheds any direct light on the questions how and when this was accomplished. With regard to the manner of composition, there is some reason to suppose that the Qur'ān was put together out of plurality of earlier Hagarene religious works. In the first place, this early plurality is attested in a number of ways. On the Islamic side, the Koran itself gives obscure indications that the integrity of the scripture was problematic, and with this we may compare the allegation against `Uthmam that the Koran had many books of which he had left only one. On the Christian side, the monk of Bet Hale distinguishes pointedly between the Koran and the *surat al-baqara* as source of law, while Levond has the emperor Leo describe how Hajjaj destroyed the old Hagarene 'writings'."[233] They further assert, that the literary character of the Koran, obscurity of meanings, lack of structure and repetition of whole passages lead one plausibly to argue that "the book is the product of the belated and imperfect editing of materials from a plurality of traditions. At the same time the imperfection of the editing suggests that the emergence of the Koran must have been a sudden, not to say hurried, event."[234] They conclude, that this conspiracy took place at the time of Hajjaj (by the end of seventh century). "It is thus not unlikely that we have here the historical context in which the Koran was first put together as Muhammad's scripture."[235]

This theory is so nonsensical and historically unsubstantiated that Christian, Jewish and Islamic scholars have rejected it altogether. Serjeant, in his review of Wansbrough's "*Qur'anic Studies*", argues that "An historical circumstance so public [as the emergence of the Qur'ān] cannot have been invented."[236] He further observes that John Burton "argues vastly more cogently than Wansbrough's unsubstantiable assertions, that the consonantal text of the Qur'an before us is the Prophet's own recension."[237] N. Daniel, reviewing "Hagarism", writes: "The notion that a "conspiracy" is involved in such a historical reconstruction becomes a rallying point for many objections."[238] Rippin, on the other hand, defends the theory, arguing that "one hundred years is a long time, especially when one is dealing not with newspaper headlines and printing presses but the gradual emergence of a text at first within a select circle, then into ever widening circles. One could point to similar instances of "conspiracies" in the canonization of the other scriptures, for example the identification of John the disciple with the Gospel of John is well less than a century after the emergence of the text."[239] Rippin still have to substantiate his claim that the same "conspiracy" did take place in connection with the Qur'ān.

Contrary to that, Fazlur Rahman observes that "There are a number of problems with this. Consider first Wansbrough's second thesis, that the Qur'ān is a composite of several traditions and hence post-Prophetic. I feel that there is a distinct lack of historical data on the origin, character, evaluation, and personalities involved in these "traditions." Moreover, on a number of key issues the Qur'ān can be understood only in terms of chronological and developmental unfolding within a single document."[240] He further argues that "Wansbrough's method makes nonsense of the Qur'ān, and he washes his hands of the responsibility of explaining how that "nonsense" came about."[241] He declares these methods as "so inherently arbitrary that they sink into the marsh of utter subjectivity."[242] We may conclude this discussion with R. W. Bulliet, who in his recent book "Islam, The View from the Edge", has observed: "I cannot imagine how so abundant and cohesive a religious tradition as that of the first century of Islam could have come into being without a substantial base in actual historical event. Concocting, coordinating, and sustaining a fantasy, to wit, that Muhammad either did not exist or lived an entirely different sort of life than that traditionally depicted, and inculcating it consistently and without demur among a largely illiterate community of Muslims dispersed from the Pyrenees to the Indus River would have required a conspiracy of monumental proportion. It would have required universal agreement among believers who came to differ violently on issues of far less import."[243]

Moreover, the question of the integrity of the Qur'ānic text raised by the authors of "Hagarism" is also unsubstantiated. It is just a repetition of the medieval stereotypes of "dove" and "bull" stories and claims of Pedro de Alfonso and others that "the existing Qur'ān does not really represent what the Prophet originally claimed."[244] It is a universally recognized historical fact that the unity, integrity, and absolute textual uniformity of the Qur'ān has been maintained since its compilation into a single volume and text. There is and has been only one and the same Qur'ānic text in the entire world. W. Muir, recognizing the purity of `Uthmanic text, wrote: "The recension of Uthman had been handed down to us unaltered. So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved, that there are no variations of importance-we might almost say no variations at all-among the innumerable copies of the Coran scattered throughout the vast bounds of the empire of Islam. Contending and embittered factions, taking their rise in the murder of Othman himself within a quarter of a century from the death of Mahomet, have ever since rent the Mahometan world. Yet

but ONE CORAN has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by them all in every age up to the present day of the same scripture, is an inrefragable proof that we have now before us the very text prepared by command of the unfortunate Caliph. There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text."[245] Burton concluded his book with the following words: "only one text of the Qur'ān has ever existed. This is the universally acknowledge text on the basis of which alone the prayer of the Muslim can be valid. A single text has thus already always united the Muslims....What we have today in our hands is the muṣḥaf of Muhammad."[246] H. Lammen's suggested that "The Qoran, as it has come down to us, should be considered as the authentic and personal work of Muhammad. This attribution cannot be seriously questioned and is practically admitted, even by those Muhammaden sects who obstinately dispute the integrity of the text; for all the dissidents, without exception, use only the text accepted by the orthodox."[247]

The dissident sects mentioned above, are some of the extreme Shī`a sects. These sects claimed that two chapters of the Qur'ān regarding the merits of the Prophet's family ["*Ahl al-bayt*"] and defining their right to rule in general and `Alī's privileges in particular, were omitted by the first three caliphs who succeeded Muhammad in power.[248] Some of these sects also maintained that `Alī's collection of the Qur'ānic text was different from that of Abū Bakr and `Uthmān.[249] Such claims of falsification in the Qur'ānic text are roundly rejected by the *Sunnis* as well as by the mainstream *Shī`a* scholars.[250] On the Orientals side, a number of scholars have thoroughly examined the issue and have reached the conclusions just similar to those of the mainstream Muslims. Gatje writes, that "Such accusations, which are tantamount to alleging a conscious falsification to the determent of `Ali and his successors, do not stand up under investigation. On the contrary, a so-called 'Sura of Light', which has been handed down outside the Qur'ān, represents with certainty a Shi`ite falsification."[251] Burton argues, that "Ali succeeded `Uthman and if he had any reservation about the Qur'ān text, he could easily have reinstated what he regarded as the authentic revelation."[252] Muir denounces these accusations as "incredible". He, giving a number of reasons to reject these accusations, writes: "At the time of the recension, there were still multitudes alive who had the Coran, as originally delivered, by heart; and of the supposed passages favoring Ali-had any ever existed-there would have been numerous transcripts in the hands of his family and followers. Both of these sources must have proved an effectual check upon any attempt at suppression." He further argues, that "The party of Ali shortly after assumed an independent attitude, and he himself succeeded to the Caliphate. Is it conceivable that either Ali, or his party, when thus arrived at power, would have tolerated a mutilated Coran-mutilated expressly to destroy his claims? Yet we find that they used the same Coran as their opponents, and raised no shadow of an objection against it." Muir concludes arguing that "Such a supposition, palpably absurd at the time, is altogether an after-thought of the modern Sheeas."[253]

The preservation of the Qur'ānic text in such a fashion, orthodox Muslims believe, is a miracle of Allāh. The Qur'ān in its very early Meccan period reported the divine promise that "We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)." (al-Qur'ān 15:9). Mawdūdī explains the verse by observing that "The unbelievers dubbed the Prophet...as crazed. It is emphasized here that the 'Admonition' was not something which the Prophet (peace be upon him) made up; instead it was revealed to him by God. Hence, the taunts and abuse hurled at the Prophet (peace be upon him) is in fact aimed at God. The unbelievers are

also asked to disabuse their minds of the idea that they would be able to cause any hurt to the Book of God. For God stands guard over it. No one can, therefore, destroy the Book, nor suppress its message. The taunts and attacks that the unbelievers throw at the Qur'ān will not detract from its value. Nor will their opposition to it impede the spread of its message. Nor will God allow anyone to distort or alter it."[254] It is due to this divine promise and due to the Qur'ān's wondrous nature and inimitability (*'Ijāz*), that nobody, even the above mentioned extreme Shī'a sects, have been able to introduce anything in the Qur'ānic text. Such a meticulous preservation is a historically attested and universally recognized fact in connection with the text of the Qur'ānic. The Shī'as, observes Lammens, have "not dared to introduce these restitutions into Qorans which the sect uses for liturgical ceremonies and which agree with the edition transmitted by the Sunni channel."[255] Consequently, there is only one text of the Qur'ān in the hands of both Sunni and Shī'a Muslims. Such a universally recognized text of the Qur'ān enjoys the normative authority in both the above mentioned Islamic sects. A modern scholar on "Shiism", David Pinault observes that, "In Sunnism and Shiism alike the Qur'ān enjoys an authority not fully comparable with that of the Bible in Judaism and Christianity. The latter religions ascribe the Bible to human authors (albeit divinely inspired) and consider the component texts comprising Scripture to be the product of human history, the records of the Creator's interaction with His people. From a Muslim perspective the author of the Qur'ān is not Muhammad nor any other human but rather God Himself..."[256] S. Hossein Nasr, who himself happens to be a Shī'ite, puts the point in a nutshell: "There is only one text accepted by all Muslims, Sunnis and Shi'ites and other branches of Islam alike, and it is this definitive book which stands as the central source of truth, guidance and of inspiration for all Muslims."[257]

The Qur'ān is held to be revealed in seven variants of recitation or *qirā'ah*.[258] These variants of recitation were approved and tolerated by the Prophet himself because they were congenial to the reciters tribal or local linguistic traditions.[259] These variants do not cause much change neither in the meaning nor in the structure or format of the verses.[260] Some Orientalists have misunderstood and overemphasized these various modes of recitation to insinuate a sort of disunity and nonconformity in the Qur'ānic text.[261] In addition to the Muslim scholars, some Orientalists themselves have concluded over the years that these variants are just different ways of pronouncing the text and that they do not make much difference neither in the meaning nor overall sense of the Qur'ānic text. A. S. Tritton observes: "There are seven or ten different 'readings' of the Koran; these are for the most part what the English word implies, different ways of pronouncing the text, elision or assimilation of certain letters. Many variants in vocalization are recorded but they are so slight as to be negligible, except for specialists: they make no vital difference to the sense."[262] Sir W. Muir writes, that "The various readings are wonderfully few in number, and are chiefly confined to differences in the vowel points and diacritical signs."[263] Willaim A. Graham remarks that "Accordingly, seven, ten, or fourteen traditions of *qira'āt* are sometimes cited as "authentic" in the Muslim literature, and even these traditions have branched to form subtraditions. As a result, the panoply of variant *riwayat* that the expert must master is quite large, even though the actual textual variations they represent are relatively minor and do not involve crucial differences in the literal meaning of the sacred text."[264] These conclusions of the Orientalists are almost identical to the Muslim's views regarding the issue at hand. For instance, al-Fārūqī observes: "These variants of recitations were authorized by the Prophet himself, and were kept as exegetical footnotes in commentaries, or pāssed from generation to

generation as qirā'ah or " recitation tradition." These variants affect neither the form nor the substance nor the meaning of the Qur'ān."[265]

The above discussed facts have led a modern scholar from Harvard to reach the conclusions that are fairly close to the traditional Muslim views *viz-a-viz* the authenticity and integrity of the Qur'ān. H. P. Smith observes that "there is no reason to suspect either its integrity or its authenticity. The assurances we have on this point are very complete. The prime fact is that the revelations were committed to memory by a large body of converts during the life of Mohammad....There can be no reasonable doubt that the copies in our hands correspond very closely with this original, and that this original does not vary in any important particular from the text recited by Muhammad himself."[266] R.V.C. Bodley observes, that "today there is no possible doubt that the Koran which is read wherever there are Moslems, is the same version as that translated from Hafsa's master copy.... What is important is that the Koran is the only work which has survived for over twelve hundred years with an unadulterated text. Neither in the Jewish religion nor in the Christian is there anything which faintly compares to this."[267]

In addition to that, the Arabic, the original language of the Qur'ān and the Prophet, is still alive and actively used by millions of people today. Al-Fārūqī observes that "Arabic is a Semitic tongue: in fact, it is the only Semitic tongue which has remained uninterruptedly alive for thousands of years; and it is the only living language which has remained entirely unchanged for the last fourteen centuries."[268] We have already quoted Hitti who argues, that it was the Qur'ān that "kept the language uniform. So that whereas today a Moroccan uses a dialect different from that used by an Arabian or an Iraqi, all write in the same style."[269] In fact it was the Qur'ān which, according to Esposito, was "central to the development of Arabic linguistics and provided the basis for the development of Arabic grammar, vocabulary, and syntax."[270]

Moreover, unlike the Bible, the Qur'ān, Muslims believe, is the divine Word of God, the revelation verbatim. It is authoritative and normative to the very definition of the word. S. H. Nasr observes: "The Qur'ān is not simply the human transcription of the Word of God. It is the verbatim Word of Allāh revealed to the Prophet of Islam in the Arabic language which Allāh chose for His last revelation,..."[271] Muslims may differ, and have differed, over the interpretations and meanings of the words, but never have they questioned the authenticity, truthfulness and the authoritative nature of the Qur'ānic text. J. A. Williams observes: "The Qur'ān then, is the Word of God, for Muslims. While controversies have raged among them as to the sense in which this is true-whether it is the created or uncreated Word..., that it is true has never been questioned by them."[272] It is interesting to note, that the Muslims throughout their history and without exception, have accepted all parts of the Qur'ān, the entire Qur'ānic text, as the verbatim Word of God.[273] They have revered it as the first determining principle of their religious beliefs, the fundamental source of their Law, and the first rate authority regarding matters of faith and religion by no way superseded by any other authority.[274] A. Rippin observes, that "whatever the case, one thing remains quite clear. The Qur'ān is, and has been from the beginning of the emergence of Islam as a religion, the primary source and reference point. Indeed, the Qur'ān in its function as that source of authority is the defining point of Islamic identity. The emergence of the Muslim community is intimately connected with the emergence of the Qur'ān as an authoritative text in making decisions on matters of law and theology."[275] Josef van Ess also observes, that "thē Muslims are not cut off

from the Word of God, for the Qur'ān not only interprets what God has said but contains God's ipsissima verba. Each and every denomination of Islam believes in Muhammad's verbal inspiration. This was a logical result of the Islamic notion of prophecy, and we have already seen it taken for granted at every point when God turns to Muhammad with the imperative "Say." Islamic theology is thus spared the trouble of searching the Qur'ān for the authentic sayings of Muhammad; and only an unbelieving student of Islamics could claim that the utterances of the Qur'ān reflect the faith of the earliest Muslim community."[276] Therefore, the text of the Qur'ān is such an authority that provides the meanings to the believers and is not often hijacked or given at the mercy of the interpreter.

There has been a tendency common to several contemporary Muslim scholars to conceive the human aspect of the Qur'ānic revelation by emphasizing the part played by the person of the Prophet in receiving the Qur'ān. Some of these modernists have also emphasized the need to apply historical, philological, and literary methods to the text of the Qur'ān.[277] For instance, Fazlur Rahman argues, that "The Qur'ān itself certainly maintained the `otherness', the `objectivity' and the verbal character of the Revelation, but had equally certainly rejected its externality *vis-a-vis* the Prophet. It declares, "The Trusted Spirit has brought it down upon your heart that you may be a warner" (XXVI, 194), and again, "Say: He who is an enemy of Gabriel (let him be), for it is he who has brought it down upon your heart" (II, 97). But orthodoxy (indeed all medieval thought) lacked the necessary intellectual tools to combine in its formulation of the dogma the otherness and verbal character of the Revelation on the one hand, and its intimate connection with the work and the religious personality of the Prophet on the other, i.e. it lacked the intellectual capacity to say both that the Qur'ān is entirely the Word of God and, in an ordinary sense, also entirely the word of Muhammad. The Qur'ān obviously holds both, for if it insists that it has come to the `heart' of the Prophet, how can it be external to him?"[278] He further argues that "The Qur'ān is thus pure Divine Word, but, of course, it is equally intimately related to the inmost personality of the Prophet Muhammad whose relationship to it cannot be mechanically conceived like that of a record. The Divine Word flowed through the Prophet's heart."[279]

Furthermore, he distinguishes between the moral regulations of the Qur'ān and the legal regulations. To him "The moral law is immutable: it is God's "Command", Man cannot make or unmake the Moral Law: he must submit himself to it..."[280] Legal regulations, on the other hand, are contingent. Quoting the Qur'ānic injunctions regarding polygamy and the institution of slavery as examples, Rahman concludes, that "These examples, therefore, make it abundantly clear that whereas the spirit of the Qur'ānic legislation exhibits an obvious direction towards the progressive embodiment of the fundamental human values of freedom and responsibility in fresh legislation, nevertheless the actual legislation of the Qur'ān had partly to accept the then existing society as a term of reference. This clearly means that the actual legislation of the Qur'ān cannot have been meant to be literally eternal by the Qur'ān itself. This fact has no reference to the doctrine of the eternity of the Qur'ān or to the allied doctrine of the verbal revelation of the Qur'ān."[281]

Rahman forgets that the institutions of polygamy and slavery were not original to the Qur'ān. Polygamy existed centuries before the revelation of the Qur'ān.[282] As a guidance to mankind, the Qur'ān had to address these issues. The Qur'ān's condoning of polygamy was not as a piece of

pure male chauvinism. It was meant to be a piece of social legislation.[283] The Qur'ān just regularized the then unlimited choice of the men to four wives, connecting such a choice closely with the then pressing practical problem of the Muslim community i.e., the heavy losses at *Uḥud* and the resulting surplus number of orphans. The Qur'ān also connected this social responsibility with the stern condition of absolute justice, "But if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or which your right hand possess." (al-Qur'ān 4:3) It also warned men from the outset that "Ye are never able to do justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire..." (4:129) Therefore it can be argued, that there is nothing in the Qur'ānic understanding of the institution of polygamy that is specific or related only to the society of the seventh century Arabia.[284] Polygamy, to the Qur'ān, is not a privilege; it is a social responsibility. In the presence of such a pressing situations and circumstances as those of Medina after the battle of *Uḥud*, the Qur'ānic institution of polygamy with its qualifying principles, may serve as an alternative, better than promiscuity or serial polygamy, even in the modern times.[285]

Similarly, the institution of slavery was a part and parcel of not only the Arabian society, but also of the other leading societies of the time.[286] Unlike the existing system, the Qur'ān condoned neither maltreatment of the slaves nor the institution of slavery to a great extent. The Qur'ān took practical and revolutionary steps to gradually eliminate the vast gulf that lied between the slaves and their masters.[287] The Qur'ānic legislation of freeing slaves (*al-'Itq*) as an atonement for many intentional and non-intentional religious violations (4:92; 5:89; 58:3), promises of great rewards for freeing or buying the freedom of slaves (90:13), frequent emphasis upon absolute equality, brotherhood, and mutual respect between the slaves and the masters (49:13),[288] encouraging masters to marry or free the slave-girls, and promulgation of the institution of "*mukātabah*" i.e., the buying of a slave of his freedom by paying the price for such a freedom over a period of time and in installments (24:33),[289] assigning a special portion of *Zakāt* for freeing the slaves and other related areas such as helping a *mukātab* etc. (9:60),[290] all these are just a few examples of how the Qur'ān dealt with the issue of slavery. Moreover, the stern attitude of the Prophet regarding the rights, equality, and respect of the slaves as brothers in humanity and faith, worked as an additional element enforcing the Qur'ānic spirit of equality and kindness towards the slaves. M. Quṭb observes that "Islam successfully put an end to all those old sources whence slavery sprang up save one, which it was virtually impossible to do away with, and that was war, the only effective source of this evil left behind after the crusade if Islam against it."[291] Quṭb further argues that "Islam could not effect the abolition of slavery so long as the world did not agree to put an end to the only source of slavery-the enslavement of prisoners-of-war. But when that concord was achieved, Islam welcomed it..."[292]

Such a sharp difference of focus and perspective on the part of the Qur'ān, regarding polygamy and slavery, refutes Rahman's claims that the Qur'ān accepted the then existing society as a point of reference. It is the other way around. Moreover, such a legislation of the Qur'ān cannot be interpreted as temporal or connected with a specific society or region. The existence and public practice of the institution of slavery until our modern times, nullifies such a supposition. Therefore, these examples do not prove the point Rahman has raised i.e., that the Qur'ānic legal regulations are contingent. In addition to that, the mainstream Islam has always accepted all the

Qur'ānic regulations as eternal and authoritative. What are the basis for Rahman's differentiation between the moral and legal legislations of the Qur'ān, are not known.

On the other hand, such interpretations and views of Rahman may not be taken to the extremes where Rippin seems to take them. To Rippin, these interpretations of Rahman mean that the Qur'ān is not "revealed literally but... installed in Muhammd's heart and then spoken through the human faculties of the prophet. The language, therefore, is Muhammad's, although it is still possible to hold that this is ultimately God's word also."[293]

Rahman has made it very clear through his works that the words of the revelation were also from God. He argued that "Whatever the agency of Revelation, however, the true revealing subject always remains God, for it is He Who always speaks in the first person..."[294] He further observed that "the Prophet actually mentally "heard" words is clear from 75:16-19: "Do not hasten your tongue with it [the Revelation] in order to anticipate it. It is our task to collect it and recite it. So *when we recite it, follow its recital,* and then it is also our task to explain it" (see also 20:114). It is also clear that, in his anxiety to retain it or to "anticipate" it in a direction different from that of his Revealing Spirit, the Prophet moved his tongue of his own ordinary human volition, the intrusion of which was repudiated by God. This necessarily implies the total "otherness" of the agent of Revelation from the conscious personality of Muhammad in the act of Revelation."[295] Therefore, the second judgment of Rippin about Rahman seems more plausible. Rippin observed, that to Rahman "it is the history of Islam which has taken Muslims away from the proper understanding of the Qur'ān; the text of scripture itself is still a perfect reflection of standards as they should be, as long as it is properly understood."[296]

We may possibly interpret Rahman's above discussed views as more fully related to the interpretations given to the Qur'ānic text over the centuries by the Muslim orthodoxy, rather than with the Qur'ānic text itself. I would probably have the same observations about Rahman as Prof. Netton has observed about the blind Syrian poet, Abū al-`Alā' al-Ma`arrī (973-1057), whose *Risālat al-Ghufrān* (The Epistle of Pardon) and "skeptical attitudes towards religion aroused considerable suspicions."[297] He, to Netton, "was probably not anti-religion *per se* but against its organization and ritualized aspects. He sought truth but objected strongly to the truth being encapsulated in rigid formulae."[298] Likewise, Rahman seems to be critical of the so called orthodoxy and their claims to sole authority of interpreting the Qur'ān. To Rahman, the text of the Qur'ān is the Word of God and normative; however; he seems somewhat dissatisfied with the method this text had been understood by some Muslims in the past. He, like other neo-Modernists, (Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalaf Allāh, Muḥammad Abū Zayd, Moḥammad Arkoun, just a few names to be mentioned here),[299] is looking for such interpretations of the Qur'ānic text that, to him, are appropriate or essential in connection with the developing circumstances of the modern day life. He wants to do that without denying the divine origin of the Qur'ān. Therefore, the neo-Modernists like Rahman cannot be quoted as examples in Islam of the trend common among the modern biblical scholars to view the Scriptures as the Word of God mixed with the word of man or to emphasize the human aspect in the revelation. The Qur'ān, to all the Muslims without exception, is the Word of God.

Contrary to that, this firm Muslim belief of the divine composition of the Qur'ān, has persistently been denied by the Western writers down the years. The overwhelming majority of these writers has categorically rejected the claims of the Qur'ān, Muhammad, and Muslims of all ages and times, that Almighty God directly revealed the text of the Qur'ān to Muhammad and that Muhammad's sole function was to receive and convey the Qur'ān to mankind with absolute sincerity and precision. A great majority of the Western scholars claim that the Qur'ān was composed by Muhammad with or without the help of others. For instance, Sale argued "That Muhammad was really the author and chief contriver of the Qur'ān is beyond dispute; though it be highly probable that he had no small assistance in his design from others."[300] Sir William Muir in the last century,[301] Wollaston in 1905, Menezes in 1911, Draycott in 1916,[302] Lammens in 1926,[303] Champion and Short in 1959,[304] Glubb in 1970, and Rodinson as late as 1977, advocated the same view about the Qur'ānic composition. Menezes wrote that the Qur'ān is "nothing else but a pure creation and concoction of Mohammed and of his accomplice"[305] W. M. Watt summarized Western views about the Qur'ān in the following words: "The Western secularist holds (or should hold, if he allows for the distinction made by Muhammad) that the Qur'ān is the work of some part of Muhammad's personality other than his conscious mind. The third main view is that the Qur'ān is the work of Divine activity, but produced through the personality of Muhammad, in such a way that certain features of the Qur'ān are to be ascribed primarily to the humanity of Muhammad; this is presumably the view of those Christians who admit some Divine truth in Islam, though it has never been fully worked out."[306]

M. Khalifa refutes all such claims by two main arguments. "Firstly, the Arabic literary style as evidenced in the Sacred Book is exalted above any other work--including Muhammad's own speeches and sayings. Secondly, the subject matter, covering as it does such an infinite range of ideas and touching on topics then unknown to mortal mind, could never have been conceived either by Muhammad or by any of his contemporaries."[307] Khalifa quotes many Qur'ānic verses, bearing true and exact scientific information, to argue that these verses' "subject matter could not have been devised by Muhammad, no matter how creative his imagination. Nor could it have been taught to him by mortal..."[308] Maurice Bucaille,[309] Seyyed Hossein Nasr,[310] Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad,[311] `Abd al-Majīd A. al-Zindānī,[312] and many other Muslim writers have taken the same route to argue about the divine origin and composition of the Qur'ān. They intend to prove the absolute divine nature of the Qur'ān from the scientific data available there.

Finally, it will be pertinent to mention here that the Qur'ān divides its verses into "*muḥkam*" and "*mutasābih.*"[313] The word "*muḥkam*" means "solid, firm, accurate, precise, exact, tight etc." Therefore, the "*muḥkam*" are those verses that convey the precise and exact meanings without rendering different or conflicting interpretations. The "*mutashābih*", on the other hand, are those verses which render more than one apparently similar meanings or interpretations.[315] This kind of verses i.e., the "*mutashābih*", are very few in number and are to be understood in the light of the precise verses. The "*muḥkam*" verses, according to the Qur'ān, are "the mother" and the foundation of the Qur'ān.[316] It does not mean the denial of the text or the meanings of such (*mutashābih*) verses or their complete hijacking through devices of allegorism. Contrary to that, it implies a selection or choosing of one of the philological meanings of the *mutashābih* phrases as their metaphorical interpretation and as appropriate or intended meanings. Such a selection has to

take place in light of the clear and precise passages of the Qur'ān. The very few Qur'ānic verses that express God in seemingly anthropomorphic terms are, for instance, placed under this category. Followers of various Islamic sects differ over the meanings and interpretations of these Qur'ānic phrases without denying the canonization or authority of the text or the passages containing such phrases. The Qur'ān, to all the mainstream Muslims, is the Holy Scripture, the very Word of God verbatim and can not be altered or superseded by any other authority. It will be useful to quote Graham once more, who observes: "*The specific understanding of their own scripture is also different among Muslims from that among either Jews or Christians. While all three traditions have been characterized by the centrality of scripture in worship, piety, devotion, and faith, the Qur'ān stands more clearly alone as the transcendent focus of Muslim faith than does the Christian or even the Jewish Bible in its tradition of faith. It is of course true that the Torah in its most basic sense as the Law revealed at Sinai play a role for Jews akin in significance to that of the Qur'ān for Muslims, and further that Christians, especially Protestant Christian, attachment to the scriptural Word of God has been overwhelmingly important. Nevertheless, the character of the Qur'ān as the verbatim speech of God sets it apart. Whereas the divine presence is manifest for Jews in the Law and for Christians in the Person of Christ, it is in the Qur'ān that Muslims directly encounter God.*" [317]

Transcendence of God And Al-Qur'ān:

"Needless to say", observes Izutsu, "Allāh, according to the Koran, is not only the supreme but also the Only Being worthy to be called "being" in the full sense of the word-Reality with a capital letter-to which nothing in the whole world can be opposed. Ontologically, the Koranic world is most evidently theocentric... God stands in the very center of the world of being, and all other things, human or non-human, are His creatures and are as such infinitely inferior to Him in the hierarchy of being. There can be, in this sense, nothing that would stand opposed to Him. And this precisely what was meant ... that, semantically, Allāh is the highest focus-word in the vocabulary of the Koran, presiding over all the semantic fields and, consequently, the entire system."[318] The late al-Fārūqī observes: "Reality is of two generic kinds, God and non-God; Creator and creature. The first order has but one member, Allāh (SWT). He alone is God, the Eternal, the Creator, the Transcendent. "Nothing is like unto Him". He remains forever absolutely unique and devoid of partners and associates. The second is the order of space-time, of experience, of creation. It includes all creatures, the world of things, plants and animals, humans, *jinn* and angels, heaven and earth, paradise and hell, and all their becoming since they came into being. The two orders of Creator and creation are utterly and absolutely disparate as far as their being, or ontology, as well as their experience and careers, are concerned. It is forever impossible that the one be united with, infused, confused with or diffused into the other. Neither can the Creator be ontologically transformed so as to become the creature, nor can the creature transcend and transfigure itself so as to become, in any way or sense, the Creator."[319]

The belief in the Unity, Oneness, Uniqueness and Transcendence of God Almighty is the pivot of al-Qur'ān. That is the thread which runs through the entire Qur'ānic corpus and is the core of the Qur'ānic message. The all Qur'ānic concepts, ideas, and ideologies are woven together to pinpoint, elaborate, and describe this very doctrine of the Oneness, Unity, and Transcendence of

God, and to encourage mankind to establish a meaningful and right relationship with Him. There is so much emphasis in the Qur'ān upon the Oneness, Unity and Uniqueness of Almighty God that no stone seems to be left unturned to make it crystal clear even to a cursory reader. Moreover, the Qur'ānic concept of "Monotheism" is neither progressive nor ambiguous. It is neither confusing nor contradictory. It is monotheistic and theocentric to the very definition of the word. It is negative, affirmative, rational, normative and self explanatory.

The Qur'ānic monotheism does not start with monolatry or with the affirmations of the existence or Oneness of the Deity. It starts by absolutely negating all concepts, kinds, ideas, understandings, and illusions of divinity or godhead other then the One and the only Divine. It starts with the Credo of Islam "*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*", the *shahādah* or confession, which is derived from the Qur'ān itself. The whole Qur'ān, observes Charles Eaton, is "a commentary on these four words, or as an amplification of them."[320] The first part of this declaration, "*Lā ilāha*", negates the existence of each and any false god, and condemns false devotion, worship, and ideas of dependence upon such gods. Peter J. Awn rightly observes: "The profession of faith (*shahāda*) is a commitment to radical monotheism..."[321]

The Arabic word "*ilāh*" is a comprehensive word. It stands for a number of mutually interconnected meanings. The root of this word consists of three letters i.e., *alif, lām* and *ha*. Al-Iṣfahānī and Mowdūdī have shown the connotations of various derivatives of this word, as found in the lexicons, as follows:
1: Became confused or perplexed.
2: Achieved peace and mental calm by seeking refuge with someone or establishing relation with him.
3: Became frightened of some impending mishap or disaster, and someone gave him the necessary shelter.
4: Turned to another eagerly, due to the intensity of his feelings for him.
5: The lost offspring of the she-camel rushed to snuggle up to its mother on finding it.
6: Became hidden, or concealed. Also got elevated.
7: Adored, offered worship to.[322]

These literal meanings of the word make it clear, that the word "*ilāh*" stands for any thing awfully mysterious, concealed, frightening, extremely attractive, absorbing one's whole, demanding absolute love, adoration, dependence, and worship. Whatever and whosoever possesses these qualities, and makes human beings adore, worship, or take refuge in it or him, can be called "*ilāh*". Therefore, the word can refer to any being, person, matter, or concept which attracts people's full attention and is taken as an object of worship and absolute adoration whether out of love or fear. S. Murata and W. Chittick observe that "A god, the Arabic dictionaries tell us, is anything that is taken as an object of worship, adoration, or service. The Koran uses the word in both positive and negative senses, which is to say that it may denote the true god or a false god."[323] It may be added, that the Qur'ān frequently uses the term for the true God. There are some verses where it uses the same term for the false gods also. (For instance, see 28:38; 15:96; 17:22, 39; 25:43; 45:23).

By means of the first part of the *shahādah*, the existence as well as the reality of any and every god and object of worship is absolutely negated. Eaton states this fact in the following words: "*Lā*, means "No" and when "spoken by an Arab has an almost explosive force, and here it is the explosive negative which destroys all illusions, shattering multiplicity as a self-sufficient universe of objects and selfhoods. Everything in our experience can be treated-and, at one time or another, is treated-as though it had a separate existence, as though it were a `divinity' in competition with Allāh, and the word *ilāha* therefore stands for anything and everything that is so treated. The third word of the formula, *illa*, is a contraction of *in lā* (`if not'); it is sometimes called the `isthmus' (*barzakh*) between negation and affirmation-the link- and beyond this stands the true Reality, *Allāh*; and all that has been denied is restored to its true identity in God."[324]

The second part of *shahādah* contains an immediate corollary on the mission and prophethood of Muhammad. It says, "*Muḥammadun Rasūl Allāh*", "and Muhammad is the messenger of God." Louis Gardet rightly observes, that "Is this preaching not, first of all-- essentially and historically-- the rejection of polytheism, the destruction of idols, in and by the witness given to the one and unique God, the lord and creator of all that exists?"[325]

The pronouncement of this confession is the pronouncement of God's Oneness, Uniqueness and Transcendence. Perhaps that is why, it has been mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* more frequently than any other phrase.[326] It has been referred to as *Kalimah Ṭayyibah* (sacred utterance) (14:24),[327] *al-Qawl al-Thābit* (The firm Word) (14:27),[328] *Kalimat al-Taqwā* (utterance of piety) (48:26),[329] *Maqālīd al-Samāwāt-i- wa al-'arḍ* (key to the heavens and the earth) etc.[330] As this confession is the essence of the Islamic faith and the only token of entry into it, it can safely be asserted, that the Oneness, Unity and Unicity of God is the essence of Islamic religion. That is why the *shahādah* stands as the supreme religious act in Islam, and its mere recitation brings one within the fold of the "community of believers". Prophet Muhammad has been reported to have said, "One who recites with sincerity that there is no god but God will enter Paradise."[331] In another report he said, "He who bears testimony to that fact that there is no god but Allāh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh, Allāh makes him immune from Hell-Fire."[332] Prophet Moses' request for a special formula of remembrance was responded to by God in the following words: "If the seven heavens and the seven earths were placed in one pan of the Balance, and the Kalimah "*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*" in the other, the latter will outweigh the former."[333] Therefore, as al-Fārūqī observes, "At the core of religious experience stands God. The *shahādah*... asserts: "There is no god but God". The name of God, "Allāh," which simply means "The God," occupies the central position in every Muslim place, every Muslim action, every Muslim thought. The presence of God fills the Muslim's consciousness at all times. With Muslim, God is indeed a sublime obsession."[334] Gardet observes that "God the Unique, the Creator and Lord of the Judgment, polarizes the thought of Islam; He is the sole reason for its existence."[335]

In the Qur'ān, the Islamic unitarian formula with its "*Lā ilāha*" form occurs 41 times. This is in addition to the numerous other forms (23 different formulas) that the Qur'ān uses to negate godhead or divinity in any form or way.[336] The Qur'ān states: "And your God is One God: there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." (2:165)[337] At another place it says: "Allāh! There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, the Supporter of all." (3:2) This is the reality

witnessed by God and by all of His righteous creatures: "There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allāh, His angels, and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He the Exalted in Power, the Wise." (3:18)[338] Ibn Kathīr, the known Qur'ānic exegete, observes, that this verse "stresses God's Oneness (*tawḥīd*) and Transcendence..."[339] The famous "Throne Verse" (*Ayat al-Kursī*) also starts with the same confession. "Allāh! There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Supporter of all, no slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there who can intercede in His presence except as He permitteh? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) Before or After or Behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory)." (2:255) Al-Qurṭubī relates that one day the Messenger of Allāh asked Ubayy ibn Ka`ab, (one of the companions of the Prophet of Islam), "O Abū al-Mundhir! Do you know which of the verses of the Book of God in your possession is the greatest?" Ubayy said, "God and His Apostle know best." The Prophet repeated the question, and Ubayy answered, "God! There is no god but He, the Everlasting, the Eternal Sovereign." The Prophet struck Ubayy in the chest and exclaimed, "You possess true knowledge...."[340] Ibn Kathīr relates on the authority of Abī Umāmah that the Prophet said: "Whoever recites the Throne Verse after every prescribed prayer, nothing will stand between him and the *Jannah* (Paradise) except death."[341] Al-Bukhārī narrates on the authority of Ibn Mas`ūd that the Prophet said: "When you go to your bed, recite Āyat-al-Kursī, for then there will be a guard from Allāh who will protect you all night long, and Satan will not be able to come near you till dawn."[342] There are many other virtues mentioned in the books of *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* regarding the Āyat-al-Kursī.[343]

The point of emphasis in the above discussed verse is clear. This is one of the countless Qur'ānic verses that leave no room for any confusion or ambiguity *vis a vis* absolute Oneness, Uniqueness, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience and Transcendence of God. Mawdūdī explains the first part of the verse, by stating that "Irrespective of the number of gods or objects of worship set up by ignorant people, the fact remains that godhead in its entirety belongs exclusively to the Eternal Being, Who is indebted to no one for His existence. In fact, He is not only self-existent, but upon Him rests the entire order of the universe. None shares either His attributes or His power and might, and no one has the same claims against creatures as He. Hence, if anywhere in the heavens or the earth someone sets up anything or anybody as an object of worship and service (*ilāh*) either instead of or in addition to the One True God, this amounts to declaring war on reality."[344]

In view of *shahādah's* above discussed significance, L. Gardet observes, that "Even if monotheism cannot thus be considered the exclusive prerogative of Islam, the affirmation of the divine unicity in and by the Shahadah remains its characteristic heritage, the central fact structure its religious universe."[345] Al-Fārūqī observes that "This seemingly negative statement, brief to the utmost limits of brevity, carries the greatest and richest meanings in the whole of Islam. Sometimes a whole culture, a whole civilization, or a whole history lies compressed in one sentence. This certainly is the case of *al-kalimah* (pronouncement) or *al-shahādah* of Islam. All the diversity, wealth and history, culture and learning, wisdom and civilization of Islam is compressed in this shortest of sentences - *lā ilāha illā Allah* (There is no god but God.)"[346]

In addition to the *shahādah*, the Qur'ān uses many other formulas to highlight the Unity and Oneness of God. "Allāh has said: "Take not (for worship) two gods: for He is just One God: then fear me (and Me alone)." To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and on earth, and to Him is the religion always: then will ye fear other than Allāh?" (16:51-52) "But your God is One God: so submit then your will to Him..." (22:34) Prophet Muhammad is ordained to declare: "Say: What has come to me by inspiration is that Your God is One God: will ye therefore bow to His Will (in Islam)." (21:108) "Say: "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is One God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner." (18:110; see also 13:30; 13:36; 6:56, 71, 162, 163; 10:104; 13:16; 17:42, 53; 39:11, 14, 38, 64; 40:66; 41:6; 72:20)

In the famous sura *"Al-Kafirūn"* (109), the Prophet is ordered to disavow himself absolutely from the unbelievers and what they worship other than One God.[347] But it is chapter 112 *"Al-Ikhlāṣ"*, "sincerity", where the Prophet is given such a comprehensive lesson of Oneness, Uniqueness, Unicity and Transcendence of God that if one does not read from the Qur'ān anything other than this short *sūra* and properly apprehends its meaning, one cannot admit any doubt or confusion regarding the Qur'ānic concept of transcendence and strict monotheism.
T. B. Irving translates the chapter of *"Sincerity"* as follows:
"Say: "God is **Unique**! God is the Source [for everything]; He has not fathered anyone nor was He fathered, and there is nothing comparable to Him."

Irving observes, that "These 4 Meccan verses were revealed after the last chapter in the Book, **Mankind** 114, and before **The Star** 53. The Doctrine of God's pure Unity or the Divine **Oneness** is stated clearly here; in fact, it is a more strong declaration against the Godhead being looked upon as consisting of more than one person or God's having any son. The title *Al-Ikhlāṣ*, one of the divine attributes, is the direct opposite to *shirk* or the sin of 'association', and involves freeing oneself from such impure worship through pure faith. This chapter is sometimes called the "Third" of the Qur'ān, since it explains one of the three essential dogmas in Islam, but its stark simplicity is not always appreciated by non-Muslims, nor translated clearly."[348]

S. Quṭb observes: "This short *sūra* is "equivalent to one third of the Qur'ān."... And, indeed, there is nothing surprising in that. For the unity of Allāh which the Messenger was ordered to declare to the whole world is a belief ingrained in our beings, an explanation of human existence and a way of life in itself. From this standpoint, the *sura* can be said to have embraced in the clearest terms the principal and most fundamental ideas of the great truth of Islam."[349]

Al-Shawkānī relates, that "The pagans (of Mecca) said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), "O Muhammad tell us about the lineage (origin) of your Lord". As a response to that Allāh revealed "Say: Allāh is Unique..."[350] The Arabic term *"Aḥad"* is used in this *sūra* to indicate the Unicity of God instead of the frequently used Qur'ānic term *"Wāḥid"*.[351] Because, as S. Quṭb observes, the term *"Ahad"* is "much more precise than the much more frequently used term *"wāḥid"* which means "one". *"Aḥad"* has the added connotations of absolute and continuous unity and the absence of equals."[352] Al-Alūsī explains that the root of the word *"aḥad"* is *"wāḥid"*. The difference is, that *"aḥad"* cannot be divided, distributed or analyzed while *"Wāḥid"* could be.[353]

Al-Bayhaqī states that *al-Aḥad* is the "One who does not have any similar, like or an equivalent or match while *al-wāḥid* means the one who has no associate or partner. That is why God Almighty gave this name to His ownself.... As if the verse "He begets not neither is He begotten" is a kind of explanation of the verse "He is One"... and Almighty God can never be divided nor comes to an end..."[354] L. Gardet observes: "The Qur'ānic teaching does not limit itself to the affirmation of a strict monotheism. It is also clearly stated that the unique (*waḥīd*) God is one (*aḥad)* in himself, one in his nature as deity.... Juxtaposed with the striking initial profession of faith ("Allāhu aḥad") is the final correlative, "not any one," no one ("Lam yakun aḥad"). This affirmation-negation is the decisive confrontation between the creator and the created. It displays, like a diamond in its setting, the unfathomable and incommunicable mystery of the deity. "[355]

The second verse of the chapter contains the word "*al-Ṣamad*" that has been used nowhere in the Qur'ān but in the *sūra* of *Sincerity*. It is such a comprehensive word that it has been translated differently by different translators. L. Gardet tells us that "The second verse, "Allāhu Ṣamd," is awkward to translate. *Al-Ṣamad* is one of the "most beautiful names" of God, whose root has its primary meaning "without hollow," or "without cleft."[356] To Al-Jurjānī, it means "Without mixture of any sort, without any possibility of division into parts, because in God there is no `hollow'."[357] Louis Massignon would translate it as "dense to the absolute degree"; while L. Gardet as "impenetrable." That is to "evoke the density of this unity without cleft that belongs to God alone (and in turn, the meaning "unknowable"). By reinforcing the unicity of the One who is "sufficient to himself" (*ghanī*, as in sūra 2:267), *ṣamad* appears as the repetition of the intrinsic unicity of God in himself."[358] There are others who have explained the word *al-Ṣamad* as meaning "The Master who is depended upon in all matters."[359] The known disciple of Muhammad, Abū Hurayrah, said, *al-Ṣamad* is the "One who is free from want and does not need anything from anybody, while everything other than Him needs Him in everything." Ibn Jubayr said, he is the "One who is perfect in His attributes as well as actions." Ibn al-Anbarī said, *al-Ṣamad* is the "Master above whom there is no master, and upon whom all the people rely for their needs and affairs"[360] S. Quṭb observes, that *al-Samad* "means the supplicated Lord without whose permission nothing is decided. Allāh is the One Lord. He is One in His Divinity and all the other beings are but His servants. To Him and Him alone are addressed all supplications. He and He only decides everything independently. No one decides with Him. And since He is the one and only God this quality is already His."[361] M. Asad translates it as "God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being." He further observes that "This rendering gives no more than an approximate meaning of the term aṣ-ṣamad, which occurs in the Qur'ān only once, and is applied to God alone. It comprises the concept of Primary Cause and eternal, independent Being, combined with the idea that everything existing or conceivable goes back to Him as its source and is, therefore, dependent on Him for its beginning as well as for its continued existence."[362]

The third verse of the chapter "*Sincerity*", observes Gardet, "reaffirms this unicity by categorically rejecting any multiplicity within the deity of God. Without doubt it was originally directed against the "daughters of God" of the Meccan pantheon and all that the *mushrikūn* in their error "associated" with God. Later, and in connection with the Qur'ānic verses that call upon the "people of the Book" (4:171), Do not say three ... God is one.... How could he have a son?"), this verse was directed at the Christians. The thrust of this thought appears to have been intended to

place the first believers on guard against the "associationism" of the Christians, that is, against the mystery of the divine persons seen as multiplicity within the deity. This interpretation is confirmed by the ongoing controversies in which Islam reacted against the mystery of the Trinity (and that of the incarnation" as a betrayal of the divine unicity under cover of which, so it was perceived, a "cleft" in God would be introduced.)"[363] S. Quṭb observes that this verse means "that the reality of Allāh is deep-rooted, permanent and everlasting. No changeable circumstances ever effect it. Its quality is absolute perfection at all times. Birth is descent and multiplication and implies a developed being after incompleteness or nothingness. It requires espousal which is based on similarity of being and structure. All this is utterly impossible in the case of Allāh. So the quality of "One" includes the renouncement of a father and a son." [364]

It may be noticed here, that the Qur'ān categorically rejects the Christian concept of Trinity and Jesus' sonship, as has been discussed in the previous chapter. Such a categorical rejection of the Christian doctrine of "Incarnation" is not the subject of only this verse of the chapter "*Sincerity*", but of many other chapters and passages of the Qur'ān.[365] After giving a detailed description of Jesus' birth from virgin Mary, the Qur'ān says: "It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allāh that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is." (19-35) There are many other Qur'ānic passages which address the issue at length. "They say: "Allāh hath begotten a son": Glory be to Him.- Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him. The Originator of the heavens and the earth: when He decreeth a matter, He saithto it: "Be," and it is." (2:116-17) The Qur'ān argues about the same point from a different perspective: "No son did Allāh beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allāh! (He transcends) the (sort of) things they attribute to Him! He knows what is hidden and what is open: too high is He for the partners they attribute to Him." (23:91-92) "Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth: how can He have a son when He hath no consort? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things. That is Allāh, your Lord! There is no god but He, The Creator of all things: then worship ye Him: and He hath power to dispose of all affairs." (6:101-2) As Gardet has already mentioned, the Qur'ān addresses the "People of the Book" directly: "O People of the Book! commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allāh aught but the truth. The Messiah Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a Messenger of Allāh, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allāh and His Messengers. Say not "Three": desist: it will be better for you: for Allāh is One God: Glory be Him: (for Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allāh as a Disposer of affairs. Christ disdaineth not to serve and worship Allāh, nor do the angels, those nearest (to Allāh): those who disdain His worship and are arrogant, He will gather them all together unto Himself to (answer)." (4:171-72)

God revealed the Book (al-Qur'ān) to His servant (Muhammad) "that He may warn those who say, "Allāh hath begotten a son": no knowledge have they of such a thing, nor had their fathers. It is a grievous thing that issues from their mouths as a saying. What they say is nothing but falsehood." (18:4-5) The Prophet was asked to use different arguments to bring the point across: "Say: "Praise be Allāh, Who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion: nor (needs) He

any to protect Him from humiliation: yea, magnify Him for His greatness and glory!" (17:111) "Say: "If the Most Gracious had a son, I would be the first to worship." Glory to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the lord of the Throne He transcends the things they attribute to Him." (43:81-2) To the Qur'ān, the most serious sin one can commit is the claim that God has begotten a son. "They say: "The Most Gracious has betaken a son!" Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! At it the skies are about to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin, that they attributed a son to The Most Gracious. For it is not consonant with majesty of The Most Gracious that He should beget a son. Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to The Most Gracious as a servant." (19:88-93) According to the Qur'ān: "Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Allāh is Christ the son of Mary." But said Christ: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord." Whoever joins other gods with Allāh,-Allāh will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrong-doers be no one to help. They disbelieve who say: Allāh is one of the three (in a Trinity) for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous chastisement will befall the disbelievers among them. Why turn they not to Allāh and seek His forgiveness? For Allāh is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. Christ the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how Allāh doth make His Signs clear to them; and see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!" (5:72-76)

It becomes evident that the third verse of *sūra* of Unity is refuting the Christian understanding of the "Holy Trinity" as the next verse roundly rejects Christ's or Holy Spirit's equality with God in essence, glory, or majesty, as the Council of Niceae authorized.

S. Quṭb observes, that the last verse of the chapter of Unity means "that no one resembles Him in anything or is equivalent to Him in any respect, either in the reality of being, or in the fact that He is the only effective power, or in any of His qualities or attributes. This is implied in the statement of His being "One" made in the first verse, but it is repeated thus to confirm and elaborate on the fact."[366] M. Asad comments: "The fact that God is one and unique in every respect, without beginning and without end, has its logical correlate in the statement that "there is nothing that could be compared with Him"-thus precluding any possibility of describing or defining Him....Consequently, the *quality* of His being is beyond the range of human comprehension or imagination: which also explains why any attempt at "depicting" God by means of figurative representations or even abstract symbols must be qualified as a blasphemous denial of the truth."[367]

Al-Bukhārī, interpreting this *sūra*, narrates on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that "the Prophet said: "Allāh Said: "The son of Adam tells a lie against Me, though he hasn't the right to do so. He abuses me though he hasn't the right to do so. As for his telling a lie against Me, it is his saying that I will not recreate him as I created him for the first time. In fact, to repeat or to recreate a thing is easier for the One Who has created it first (So it is easier for Me to repeat or recreate a creation which I created first). As for his abusing Me, it is his saying that Allāh has begotten a son (or children), while I am the One, Aṣ-Ṣamad (self-sufficient Master Whom all creatures need, neither I eat, nor I drink). I beget not, nor was I begotten, and there is none equal or comparable unto Me."[368] He also narrates from Mu'ādh bin Jabal that "The Prophet said, "O Mu'ādh! Do you

know what Allāh's Right upon His slave is?" I said, "Allāh and His Messenger know best." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "To worship Him (Allāh) Alone and to join none in worship with Him (Allāh). Do you know what their right upon Him is?" I replied, "Allāh and His Messenger know best." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Not to punish them (if they do so)."[369]

We conclude this part of the discussion with Murata and Chittick's observation that "To say that "There is no god but God" means that no service or worship should be rendered to anything other than God, since everything other than God can only be a false god."[370] The Bible's understandings of God had left many problems unsolved, as we already had the opportunity to see in the previous chapters. Contrary to that, the Qur'ānic understanding of the Almighty has contributed greatly to work towards providing many of those solutions. P. J. Awn observes that "A commitment to monotheism is nothing new in the history of Western religious traditions. The radical monotheism of Islam, however, offers distinctive solutions to the thorny problems of the nature of God and the relationship of freedom to predestination, of good to evil, and of reason to revelation. Islam insists on God's absolute transcendence and perfect unity..."[371] Therefore the distinctive feature of Islam, as Richard C. Martin rightly observes, is that "Among the Western religious traditions, Islam has most insistently asserted the unity and oneness of God."[372]

In addition to most insistently affirming God's unity, unicity, and transcendence, the Qur'ān has aggressively attacked all kinds of idolatry, monolatry and polytheism. The *shirk* (the act of associating anything or anybody with God), according to the Qur'ān, is the only unforgivable sin: "Allāh forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allāh is to devise a sin most heinous indeed." (4:48) In 4:116, it added to the previous verse that the "one who joins other gods with Allāh, hath strayed far, far away (from the right path)." In 31:13, *shirk* is declared as the "the highest wrong-doing". "Be true in faith to Allāh, and never assigning partners to Him: if anyone assigns partners to Allāh he is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far-distant place." (22:31) Mawdūdī observes that in this parable, heaven "means the original human nature. Man by nature is the servant of none else but Allāh and inherently accepts the Doctrine of *Tawḥīd*. That is why the one who follows the guidance of the Prophets becomes firm in these dictates of his nature and soars higher and higher. On the other hand, the one who rejects Allāh or associates a partner with Him falls down from the "heaven" of his nature. Then he either becomes a victim of Satans and evil leaders like the birds of the parable, which snatch away the fallen man, or he becomes a slave of his lusts, passions, whims, etc., which have been likened to the wind in the parable. They lower him down from one wrong position to the other till he falls into the deepest abyss of degradation."[373]

In addition to these appalling warnings, the Qur'ān has vehemently denied the existence of gods as divinities other than the Almighty. "Whatever ye worship apart from Him is nothing but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers, for which Allāh hath sent down no authority: the Command is for none but Allāh: He hath commanded that ye worship none but Him: that is the right religion, but most men understand not." (12:40) Abdullah Y. Ali explains the verse as follows: "If you name other gods, they are nothing but your inventions,- names which you and your fathers put forward without any reality behind them. Who gave you authority to do any such

thing? The only reality is Allāh. Authority can come from Him alone. It is only for Him to command. And He has distinctly commanded you to worship none other than Him. That is the only religion that is right,- that has stood and will stand and endure for ever. He has revealed it at all times by His Messengers and by His Signs. If men fail to understand, it is their own fault."[374] In *sūra al-Najam* it says: "Have ye seen Lāt, and `Uzzā, and another, the third (goddess), Manāt? What! For you the male sex, and for Him, the female? Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair! These are nothing but names which ye have devised,- ye and your fathers,- for which Allāh has sent down no authority (whatever). They follow nothing but conjecture and what the souls desire!- Even though there has already come to them Guidance from their Lord!" (53:19-23).

There is an incident narrated in the histories of Ṭabarī and Ibn Sa`d[375] regarding the *Sabab al-Nuzūl* (context of revelation) of these verses.[376] The incident so narrated received almost a universal publicity as a result of Salman Rushdie's novel "*The Satanic Verses*", published on 26th September 1988.[377] This incident has long been ceased upon by a great many scholars in the West to argue that there was a time during his mission when Muhammad accepted the existence and validity of Meccan gods in view of reconciliation with Meccan opposition, and in an effort to consolidate his political position. For instance, Watt quotes the story from Ṭabarī as follows: "The account which at-Ṭabarī places first is as follows. When Muhammad saw that the Meccans were turning from his message, he had a great desire to make it easier for them to accept it. At this juncture Sūrat an-Najm was revealed; but when Muhammad came to the verses, `Have ye considered al-Lāt and al-`Uzzā, and Manāt, the third, the other?' then, the tradition continues, `as he was saying it to himself, eager to bring it to his people, Satan threw upon his tongue (the verses), "these are the swans exalted, Whose intercession is to be hoped for"'. On hearing this the Meccans were delighted, and at the end when Muhammad prostrated himself, they all did likewise. The news of this even reached the Muslims in Abyssinia. Then Gabriel came to Muhammad and showed him his error; for his comfort God revealed 22.51, and abrogated the satanic verses by revealing the true continuation of the sura. Quraysh naturally said that Muhammad had changed his mind about the position of the goddesses, but meanwhile the satanic verses had been eagerly seized by the idolaters. In his Commentary on 22.51 at-Ṭabarī gives a number of other versions of the tradition on this matter."[378]

Narrating a number of other versions and how they differ with the above quoted version, Watt argues, that "If we compare the different versions and try to distinguish between the external facts in which they agree and the motives which the various historians ascribe in order to explain the facts, we find at least two facts about which we may be certain. Firstly, at one time Muhammad must have publicly recited the satanic verses as part of the Qur'ān; it is unthinkable that the story could have been invented later by Muslims or foisted upon them by non-Muslims. Secondly, at some later time Muhammad announced that these verses were not really part of the Qur'ān and should be replaced by others of a vastly different import. The earliest versions do not specify how long afterwards this happened; the probability is that it was weeks or even months."[379] Elsewhere, Watt argues that "The story is so strange that it must be true in essentials."[380] Maxime Rodinson also argues that the tradition "may reasonably be accepted as true because the makers of Muslim tradition would never have invented a story with such damaging implications for the revelation as a whole."[381]

The conclusion Watt reaches is of dire consequences. He argues that "The Muslim scholars, not possessing the modern Western concept of gradual development, considered Muhammad from the very first to have been explicitly aware of the full range of orthodox dogma. Consequently it was difficult for them to explain how he failed to notice the heterodoxy of the satanic verses. The truth rather is that his monotheism was originally, like that of his more enlightened contemporaries, somewhat vague, and in particular was not so strict that the recognition of inferior divine beings was felt to be incompatible with it. He probably regarded al-Lāt, al-`Uzzā, and Manāt as celestial beings of a lower grade than God, in much the same way as Judaism and Christianity have recognized the existence of angels. The Qur'ān in the later...Meccan period speaks of them as jinn, although in the Medinan period they are said to be merely names. This being so, it is perhaps hardly necessary to find any special occasion for the satanic verses. They would not mark any conscious retreat from monotheism, but would simply be an expression of views which Muhammad always held."[382] He observes at another place that this passage "permitted intercession to the local deities, presumably regarded as a kind of angelic being who could plead with the supreme God on behalf of their worshippers..."[383] Watt emphatically asserts that "Indeed there is little about idols through the whole Meccan period."[384] M. Rodinson argues on the same line observing that "Muhammad's unconscious had suggested to him a formula which provided a practical road to unanimity. It did not appear to conflict with his henotheism, since these `great birds' were, like angels or jinns, conceived of as subordinate to Allāh. Elsewhere they were called the `daughters of Allāh'. On the other hand this provided a clear indication that the new teaching was in no way revolutionary, and that the new sect honored the city's divinities, respected their shrines and recognized their cult as legitimate one."[385]

Prof. Watt explains the motive behind these verses by claiming that "the leading Quraysh made some sort of offer to Muhammad; he was to receive certain worldly advantages, and in return make some acknowledgment of their deities. The Qur'ān...supports this. Of the details we cannot be certain. The promulgation of the satanic verses is doubtless to be linked up with this bargain. On this view the abrogation of the verses would simply be linked up with the failure of the compromise."[386] He further argues that Muhammad "came to realize that acknowledgment of the Banāt Allāh, as the three idols (and others) were called, meant reducing God to their level. His worship at the Ka`bah was outwardly not very different from theirs at Nakhlah, at-Ṭā'if, and Qudayd. And that would mean that God's messenger was not greatly different from their priests and not likely to have much more influence; hence the reform on which Muhammad had set his heart would not come about."[387] Rodinson argues, that Muhammad changed his mind because such an acknowledgment "meant that the sect renounced all claim to originality. Jews and Christians pointed out maliciously that Muhammad was reverting to his pagan beginnings. Besides, what force had the threat of the Last Judgment if the daughters of Allāh, propitiated by traditional offerings and sacrifices, would intercede on behalf of sinners and save them from eternal damnation? Above all, what authority was left to the herald sent by Allāh if any little priest of al-`Uzzā or Manāt could pronounce oracles contradicting his message?"[388]

Prof. Watt and Rodinson, by the above discussed conclusions, have touched upon several sensitive issues crucial to the very core of the Islamic faith. Therefore, it is important to discuss their conclusions one at a time and in details.

Firstly, we should discuss the issue of the certainty with which Prof. Watt attests the authenticity of this tradition, particularly the part claiming that the above quoted words about the goddesses were pronounced by the Prophet himself. No doubt al-Ṭabarī, and following him, many historians and Qur'ānic exegetes have repeated the tradition. All the more strange, even Ibn Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī observes that "Even though all the links by which this Tradition has been related are either weak or "broken", except in one case that of Sa`īd b. Jubayr, the very fact that it has been related through so many "links" is a proof that there is some truth about it."[389] He also observes that "there are two more chains of narrators (in addition to the one mentioned above) that satisfy the conditions (of *al-Ṣaḥīḥayn)* requisite for an authentic report."[390] At the same time, he observes that "These reports are however, all "*Mursal*" traditions, and those who believe the "*Mursal*" traditions may argue on their basis."[391]

The authenticity of the "links", however, does not necessarily mean that all contents of the narration are historically right or based on the facts that can not be denied. Such a supposition is clearly reflected from the observations of Ibn Ḥajar himself. He observes that although there is enough proof to conclude that the story has some truth in it, but some parts of the story are so atrocious that they must be rejected and interpreted in the light of other facts. To him, these atrocious parts consist of the assertion that the Satan put in the Prophet's mouth words that "they are exalted swans and their intercessions is to be hoped". He argues that "This cannot be accepted due to the fact that the Prophet was infallible. It is impossible for the Prophet to intentionally add something to the Qur'ān that does not belong to it, or forgetfully say something contradictory to what he had brought about "*Tawḥīd*" (Oneness and Unity of God) . That is why the scholars had given the tradition various interpretations...."[392] The best among these interpretations, argues Ibn Ḥajar, is the one that says that "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting the Qur'ān and the Satan kept an eye waiting to insert some thing into his recitation. The Satan found the opportunity during one of the pauses of Prophet's recitation and uttered these words in the tone resembling that of the Prophet. The people close to the Prophet heard it, took it as his words and publicized it.... Therefore, these words are the words of Satan and in no way the words uttered by the Prophet himself...."[393]

It is evident, as we see in the case of Ibn Ḥajar, that even those scholars who had argued about the authenticity of the tradition, had equally argued against the truthfulness of the assertion that the Prophet uttered any such words praising or accepting the Meccan's gods. Therefore, to claim the authenticity of the tradition by implying that Muhammad himself uttered these words, or without qualifying the tradition with the qualifiers used by the above mentioned scholars, is misleading.

Moreover, the "*Mursal*" tradition, as is the case with all the chains of this narration, is not the one directly narrated from the Prophet or from a companion or disciple of the Prophet. Ḥāfiẓ al-Irāqī defines it as the "Narration/report of a successor i.e., *Tābi`ī* (of the successor (*Ṣaḥābī*) of the Prophet), with the formula that "The Prophet said so and so"."[394] Ḥāfiẓ also tells the rule that, "The *Mursal* narration is a weak narration..."[395] The weakness of such a report stems from the fact that it is not a direct report. The original link in the chain i.e., the *Ṣaḥābī*, is missing. Consequently, it is difficult to accept a weak narration with such an authority and certainty,

especially when it contradicts the very essence of the Qur'ānic message. That the Oneness of God is the very essence of the Qur'ānic message, has been authenticated by all historical and scriptural proofs as we have already seen above.

On the other hand, there have been many eminent historians and exegetes who have declared this story as utterly baseless. M. M. Ahsan has provided a detailed list of distinguished Muslim scholars who have categorically "rejected the story as preposterous and without foundation."[396] For instance, the known exegete Ibn Kathīr, observed that "Many exegetes have mentioned the story of swans..., but through links all of them are inauthentic. I have not found a correct version of this story with continuous links."[397] Al-Shawkānī argued: "None of these narration is true, and none of them is authenticated by any way or method."[398] Al-Bayhaqī observed, that "The authenticity of this story has not been proved by the rules of *naql* (reporting)." He has given a detailed account of how some of the narrators of these reports had been discredited and defamed by the scholars of *Ḥadīth*."[399] Muhammad b. Isḥāq, the writer of "*Sīrah*" declared the story as "the work of *Zanādiqah* (atheists)".[400] Imām Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī argued, that this story is "what the Devil inspired to his atheist followers so as to cause doubts about the authenticity of the religion (Islam) in the minds of the weak. The majesty of the Prophet is absolve from such a narration or act."[401] To Ibn Khuzaymah, "This story had been invented by the heretics."

Al-Qāḍī `Iyāḍ gave a detailed refutation of the story arguing: "The very fact that this narration has neither been narrated by any of the authentic collections of the *ḥadīth* nor by any creditable narrator with continuous and authentic links, is a proof of its baselessness. It has been narrated frequently only by those exegetes and historians who are fond of going after all kinds of odd and obscure narration, and who seize upon any thing that comes their way without looking into its nature or truthfulness."[402] He, showing the variety of links and how they differ over the context, place, and content of the story, argued that such a contextual variety is enough to prove that the story "has no footing to stand on."[403] He further argued that "the *Ummah* have a consensus that the Prophet was infallible, and that he transcended such a despicable act. It is as much blasphemous to accept that the Prophet wished to be given verses praising gods besides Allāh, as it is to accept that the Satan was able to dominate him so as to confuse him with something non-Qur'ānic as Qur'ānic. It is an act of profanity to accept the claim that the Prophet did not know about such a confusion until Gabriel warned him about it. Such an impossibility cannot take place with or from a Prophet. It is also blasphemous to say that the Prophet happened to pronounce these words intentionally as it is to say that he did it forgetfully."[404]

Al-Qāḍī adds, that had the incident took place, the pagans of Makka and the Jews would have made it a point to argue against the truthfulness of the Prophet. It would have resulted in apostasy of some of the weak Muslims as was the situation regarding the incident of *al-Isrā* (ascension of the Prophet to the heavens), or at least to expressions of such a tendency as in case of the incident of the *Ḥudaybiyyah Treaty*. The fact that none of the Muslims abandoned Islam as a result of an incident of such dire consequences, and none of the foes made it an issue, (and there is no historical report that they even discussed it), it is sufficient to prove that this story was a later invention and had nothing to do with the reality.[405]

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-`Arabī forwards ten different arguments to refute the claim that the Prophet pronounced the alleged words regarding pagan's deities. He emphatically argues that it was Satan who did it in the tone of the Prophet, as was mentioned earlier. He concludes that "The Qur'ān very eloquently, and both explicitly and implicitly explains the infallibility of the Prophet.. So we advise you to place the Qur'ān in front of your eyes and read the words carefully, so as not to attribute to the Qur'ān what does not belong there, or to connect to it meanings utterly unacceptable."[406] In addition to the above discussed scholars, Imām Fakhar al-Dīn al-Rāzi,[407] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭabī,[408] Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kirmānī,[409] Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad Badr al-Dīn al-`Ainī,[410] Abū al-Ṭayyib Ṣiddīq Khān,[411] and al-Ālūsī had rejected it altogether as baseless and absurd.[412]

Among the modern Muslim scholars, Shiblī Nu`mānī observes, that "this story is evidently an absurd myth that deserves no comment. Most of the great traditionalists, for instance al-Baihaqī, Qāḍī `Iyāḍ, al-`Ainī, al-Mundhirī, and al-Nawawī have declared it to be false and fabricated."[413] Mawdūdī furnishes a detailed refutation of the story in the following words: "Its internal evidence proves it to be wrong: (a) According to the story the incident happened after the first migration to Ḥabash, for according to it some of the migrants returned to Makkah after hearing the story. Now the fact is that the migration took place in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood and some of the migrants returned to Makkah three months later, i.e. in Shawwāl of the same year. (b) Verses 73-75 of Chapter XVII in which the Holy Prophet was "reproved" for this incident were revealed in the eleventh or twelth year of Prophethood. In other words, he was "reproved" by Allāh five or six years after the incident. (c) This verse (52) in which the interpolation by Satan was abrogated was sent down in the first year of Hijrah, i.e. about two years after the reproof. Can a persōn in his senses believe that the Holy Prophet was reproved for the interpolation after six years, and it was abrogated after nine years?"[414]

After discussing the context of the verses, he argues: "Even a casual reader will detect an obvious contradiction in the passage. Immediately after "praising" the goddesses there is a hard hit on their worshippers, as if to say: "O foolish people! How is it that you have ascribed daughters to Allah and sons to yourself? All this is your own invention which has no authority from Allāh." Then the story presumes that all the Quraish who were listening to it must have lost their senses; otherwise they could not have declared that their differences with Muhammad (Allāh's peace be upon him) had been made up from thence. From this internal evidence it has become clear that this story is absurd and meaningless."[415] Mawdūdī also argues, that the revelation of these verses as asserted in the story does not "fit in with the chronological order of the Qur'ān."[416] In connection with the relevant context of the passages he observes: "We reiterate that no Tradition, however strong links it might have, can be accepted when the Text itself is a clear evidence against it, and when it does not fit with the wording, the context, the order etc. of the Qur'ān. When the incident is considered in this background, even a skeptical research scholar would be convinced that the Tradition is absolutely wrong."[417] S. Quṭb argues, that the story is so absurd, baseless, and contradictory to the fundamental principles of the Islamic religion that "it is not appropriate to discuss it or even make it a topic of discussion."[418] Moftī M. Shafī` and Iṣlāḥī also roundly reject it.[419]

Among the modern historians, M. H. Haykal argues that all arguments on which stands the claim for veracity of the story "are false, incapable of standing any scrutiny or analysis."[420] To him "It is a story whose incoherence is evident upon the least scrutiny."[421] He argues, that the multiplicity of the tradition is a proof of its lack of authenticity. Haykal claims that there were two motives for the Muslims to return from Ethiopia: (a) The conversion of `Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to Islam, and (b) The breaking out of a revolution against Negus "in which his personal faith as well as his protection of the Muslims were under attack."[422] He further argues against the story from the inverted evidence of the Qur'ānic text: "Another proof of the falsity of the story, stronger and more conclusive than the foregoing, is the fact that the contextual flow of *sūra* "al-Najm" does not allow at all the inclusion of such verses as the story claims.... The contextual background in which the addition is supposed to have been made furnishes unquestionable and final evidence that the story of goddesses was a forgery."[423] Haykal, like Shaikh Muhammad `Abduh, argues that "the Arabs have nowhere described their gods in such terms as "al-gharānīq." Neither in their poetry nor in their speeches or traditions do we find their gods or goddesses described in such terms. Rather, the word *"al-gharānīq"* or *"al-gharnīq"* was the name of a black or white water bird, sometimes given figuratively to the handsome blond youth. The fact is indubitable that the Arabs never looked upon their gods in this manner."[424] Arguing that this story contradicts Muhammad's candidness, he concludes, that "The forgers must have been extremely bold to have attempted their forgery in the most essential principal of Islam as a whole: namely, in the principle of *tawḥīd*, where Muhammad had been sent right from the very beginning to make proclamations to all mankind in which he has never accepted any compromise whatever; he was never swayed by anything the Quraysh had offered him whether by way of wealth or royal power. These offers had come, it must be remembered, at a time when Muhammad had very few followers within Makkah. Later persecution by Quraysh of his companions did not succeed in swaying Muhammad away from the call of his God or away from his mission. The *zindīq's* strategy to work their forgery around the first principle of the faith, where Muhammad was known to be the most adamant, only points to their own inconsequence."[425] In addition to Haykal, there are many other Muslim scholars who have extensively written about the issue. M. Nāṣir al-Albānī[426] and Zafar Ali Qureshi[427] are just a few examples.

Such a detailed discussion of the issue at hand is justified by the fact that it is directly related to the very fundamental dogma of Islamic faith; the Oneness of God and the infallibility of the Prophet. To accept the authenticity of the traditions without proper qualifications, as Watt has done, means demolishing the very foundation of the Islamic religion and debasing its revelation from all kinds of claims to divine origin. Qureshi observes that "It is preposterous, and absurd to entertain the idea that the Prophet could stoop down to agree to the intercession of these deities, as alleged. This would have negated his whole mission of preaching the 'stern' monotheism of Islam which he was proclaiming from the very beginning, in spite of heavy odds pitted against him."[428]

It is all the more degrading to link this story with the bargain offers, as Watt does. History is a witness that such kinds of bargains were repeatedly made to Muhammad. He never accepted these offers or compromised on the issue of the absolute Unity, Oneness, and Transcendence of God even at times of crushing opposition and absolute lack of resources.

The critical Rodinson quotes the famous story of bargain offered by the Makkan pagans to Muhammad, just before mentioning the story of the satanic verses. In response to Abū l-Walīd `Utba ibn Rabī`a's offers of business, prestige, and sovereignty, Muhammad's answer was, and I quote Rodinson, "to recite some verses from the Koran. `Utba listened carefully and went back to his companions with this advice: 'Leave him alone. By God, his words will have vast consequences. If the Arabs [that is, the Beduin] kill him, then you will be delivered from him by others. But if he triumphs over the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your sovereignty and his glory will be your glory, and through him you will be the most prosperous of men."[429] This incident of bargain, in Rodinson's opinion, "had some foundation in fact"[430] and "had an element of truth in it".[431] There are many other such examples where the Prophet had been offered enticing worldly bargains but he refused to compromise on the fundamental issue of God's Unity and Transcendence. Even in response to `Utba's this offer the Prophet recited, as Ibn Hishām narrates, the verses of Chapter 41 (*Sūra Fuṣṣilat*), containing the essential monotheistic message, "Say thou: "I am but a man like you: it is revealed to me by inspiration, that your God is One God: so take the straight path unto Him and ask for His forgiveness." And woe to those who joined gods with Allāh..." (al-Qur'ān: 41:6)[432] In some other incidents, Muhammad's response was even more stern. His reply to his uncle Abū Ṭālib's plea was: "By God if they keep the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to abandon this matter (call to the sincere worship of One God) I would not do so."[433]

It is extremely misleading and unjust to attribute to the Prophet such a compromising instance, and particularly with the interpretation and promulgation of a "try" to appease the pagans or for any worldly benefit or bargain. Qureshi rightly argues, that "History tells us that from the very beginning the Quraysh were, to all intents and purposes, not paying any heed to the Prophet but were making fun of him, slandering him, and at times, manhandling him, and in the first three or four years of his prophetic mission the number of his proselytes did not go beyond thirty to forty persons, all told... History tells us further that in spite of insults, abuse, threats, intimidations and the Sword of Damocles hanging over his head of being killed at any time, the Prophet stood his ground and did not give in to their intimidations, threats and oppression. And it was against his very nature, demeanor, posture and stand that he should entertain any desire in his heart something like making a compromise on the fundamentals of Islam and stoop down to accept the `intercession' of the three deities or goddesses, as alleged. This is absolutely a wrong posture and presentation of the Prophet, his Life, and Mission."[434]

It would suffice here to conclude this part of the discussion with the observations of two orientalists regarding this story. John Burton observed, that "those *ḥadīths* have no historical basis."[435] He further argued, that "this story must be decisively rejected once and for all."[436] K. Armstorng observed that "this story is in conflict with other traditions and with the Qur'ān itself. We must remember that a Muslim historian like Tabari does not necessarily endorse all the traditions he records: he expects the reader to compare them with others and to make up his or her own mind about their validity. At this very early stage of his prophetic career, Muhammad was not interested in political power. So the story, as told by Abu al-Aliyah, is not very likely. The Qur'ān... denies that Muhammad should have a political function in Mecca at this point, and later the Prophet would turn down similar deals with leading Quraysh without a second's thought."[437]

Secondly, according to the Islamic doctrine, the Satan is a more manageable reality then usually perceived by some other faith groups.[438] He does not have authority over God's conscious people. The Qur'ān explains: "For over my servants no authority shalt thou have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee." (15:42) Accordingly, the Satan could not have been able to play with Muhammad, the Prophet. Qureshi argues that "in the Islamic framework Satan can have no influence over the Prophet, more particularly when he was reciting the Qur'ān as he had became immune from the influence of Satan, having sought refuge of God from Satan."[439]

Thirdly, the issue of Muhammad's monotheism. Rodinson has dubbed it as "henotheism". To Watt, "his monotheism was originally, like that of his more enlightened contemporaries, some what vague, and in particular was not so strict that the recognition of inferior divine beings was felt to be incompatible with it."[440] Neither in the Qur'ānic text nor in the authentic traditions of Muhammad is found any thing like henotheism or vague monotheism allowing any room for inferior divine beings. The Qur'ānic text speaks very loud against such claims. The strict monotheism peculiar to the later Islamic tradition, had been propagated by Muhammad from the very beginning of his mission in Makka. Most of the Qur'ān (about two thirds) had been revealed in Makka. The earliest *sūras* of the Qur'ān emphatically asserted the Oneness of Almighty God, and declared worship of others besides Him as blasphemous and heretical. Stanley Lane-Poole observed, that "During the years of struggle and persecution of Mekka.... ninety out of the 114 chapters of the Koran were revealed, amounting to about two-third of the whole book. All these chapters are inspired with but one great design, and are in strong contrast with the complicated character of the later chapters issued at Medina. In the Mekka chapters Mohammed appears in the unalloyed character of prophet; he has not yet assumed the functions of a statesman and law-giver. His object is not to give men a code or a constitution. *But call them to the worship of the One God. This is the only aim of Mekkan speeches.... Every chapter is directed simply to the grand design of the Prophet's life to convince men of the unutterable majesty of the One God, who brook no rivals.... Eloquent appeals to the signs of nature, threats of a day of reckoning to come, and reality of the revelation, make up the substance of this first division of the Koran.*"[441]

It is surprising to notice that a scholar like Watt would contend that, there is "little about the idols through the whole Meccan period.",[442] and that, acceptance of Meccan goddesses as lower divine angelic beings capable of intercession on behalf of their admirers, was not incompatible with Muhammad's "vague monotheism". It is illogical to even think that out of two-third of the Qur'ān revealed at Mecca, there is little about the idols or idol worship. Chapter 112 *al-Ikhlāṣ*, which we had the opportunity to discuss earlier in this chapter, is not only the corner stone of the strict Islamic monotheism and God's transcendence, but also a measuring rod against all kinds of polytheism, henotheism and paganism. Noldeke places this *sūra* in the very first Makkan period.[443] H. Hirschfeld writes: "I feel inclined to place it among the first revelations."[444] Muir argues, that it was the 20th chapter revealed in Mecca hence putting it in the very early phase of Muhammad's mission.[445] The same is said by Muir and Noldeke about *sura al-Kāfirūn* (109), the mere recitation of which, according to Muhammad, disavows a Muslim from all kinds of *shirk* (polytheism).[446]

There is a consensus among Muslim scholars that *Sūra Yūsuf* (chapter 12) is definitely a Makkan chapter. Muir, Noldeke, and Grimme also agree that it was revealed in Makka.[447] We have had the opportunity of quoting verse 40 of *Sūra Yūsuf* where it clearly says: "Whatever ye worship apart

from Him is nothing but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers,- for which Allāh hath sent down no authority; the Command is for none but Allāh: He hath commanded that ye worship none but Him: that is the right religion, but most men understand not..." How else the Qur'ān could have possibly stated its position regarding the idolatry and polytheism is a good question to be asked! It is not a "vague monotheism". It is a strict monotheism to the very definition of the term. In addition, there are many other Makkan chapters that have addressed the issue aggressively and comprehensively.[448]

Moreover, if it were not for Muhammad's strict monotheism and stern opposition to polytheism, for what else he was persecuted, tortured, and opposed to the extent of absurdity and inhumanity on the part of Makkan pagans? Always they asked him to stop opposing their gods and respect the religion of their forefathers.[449] Certainly, it was his strict monotheism and stern opposition to worship of any person or object besides God that caused him such an opposition at Makka. He never compromised on the issue of the Oneness, Uniqueness and Transcendence of God neither in Makka nor in Medinah. T. Noldeke observed, that "Muhammad's single aim in the Meccan suras is to convert the people, by means of persuasion, from their false gods to the one God. To whatever point the discourse is directed this always remains the ground thought; but instead of seeking to convince the reason of his hearers by logical proofs, he employs the art of rhetoric to work upon their minds through the imagination. Thus he glorifies God, describes His working in Nature and History, and ridicules on the other hand the impotence of the idols. Especially important are the descriptions of the everlasting bliss of the pious and the torment of the wicked: these, particularly the latter, must be regarded as one of the mightiest factors in the propagation of Islam..."[450] Julian Obermann observed: "In early Surahs we have to do with oracle-like pronouncements of a prophet and visionary.... In contents, his early message is of extreme simplicity, it is marked by complete absence of either ritual or legal elements of any kind. What it offers is an outline, the barest rudiments of monotheistic theology. God is One, He has no equal; He is the creator of the universe and His care provides bountiful sustenance for man and beast (argument from creation): in the past He had punished people for their wrongdoing (argument from history); in the future He will judge man according to his deeds, rewarding obedience with the delights of paradise and requiting disobedience with the scourge of Hellfire."[451] Reuben Levy observed: "The earliest divine manifestations commanded him to "recite" what he heard. It was followed by others which bade him denounce the idolatrous beliefs and practices of his fellow townsmen, to whom he was to reveal a higher faith and a purer system of life. The central point of the new faith was that there is no God but Allah, a deity which was already known in the Arabian pantheon but who was henceforth to be not supreme, but unique."[452] D. S. Margoliouth wrote: "The main doctrines of the early teaching are the future life, the unity of God, and the folly of idolatry."[453] Francesco Gabrieli observed: "...In this, the earliest, and the following short, ecstatic revelations... are expressed in an enthusiastic and lyrical rather than a logical form the fundamental outlines of Muhammad's vision: one single omnipotent God (for whom the name Allah was the natural choice, not a new one to the pagan Arabs but filled with a new content and raised far above any polytheistic conception), author and ruler of creation, lord of the life of man, giver of blessing and chastisement, stern judge of the day of doom..."[454] Charles J. Adams observed: "Muhammad's preaching in Mecca centered upon the one sovereign deity, Allah, who controlled the destiny of mankind. In place of the numerous powers recognized by the pagan Arabs, Mohammad proclaimed a unique God who created the universe, established its order, and

encompassed its fate in his hand."[455] Even Richard Bell, upon whom Watt depended heavily in his treatment of the Qur'ān, did not deny the fact that the strict monotheism and refutation of paganism was the cardinal element of Muhammad's mission during the Meccan period. He observed "Muhammad claimed to be the Messenger of God to his people. He began by advocating monotheism, the worship of one God upon whose power and bounty man was dependent..."[456] He further observed that "More characteristic of the Qur'an is the reaction from pagan ideas. It was Muhammad's life-mission to overthrow the polytheism of his people... The fundamental doctrine of the Qur'an is that there is only one God. From that doctrine Muhammad *never wavered from start to finish of his mission*.... For the most part it is directed against the polytheism of his own Arab people."[457]

Rodwell,[458] Grimme,[459] W. Irving,[460] P. de Lacy Johnstone,[461] E. J. Jurji,[462] L. Gardet,[463] E. Gibbon,[464] Bevan,[465] Hitti,[466] J. J. Saunders,[467] A. Schimmel,[468] Helmer Ringgren and A. V. Storm[469] and K. Cragg,[470] are also among those scholars who fully recognize the fact that, Muhammad's monotheism and understanding of God's uniqueness and transcendence was never vague and that, he never compromised that issue from the beginning till the very end of his prophetic mission. It would suffice to quote H. Ringgern and A. V. Storm, who observe that "In a systematic summary of the contents of the Koran, the doctrine of the absolute oneness of God would undoubtedly come out as its principal tenet. There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is his prophet'... so runs the Islamic creed, and it is, indeed, an apt synopsis of the teaching of the Koran. God is one, and has no one by his side. Polytheism is fiercely attacked...."[471]

Coming back to our original discussion, it needs to be emphasized that the Qur'ān is not satisfied with mere attacks upon all kinds of polytheism, but repeatedly emphasizes the point that the false gods do not have their own existence. They are nothing but a result of their worshippers imagination. "Behold! verily to Allāh belongs all creatures, in the heavens and on earth. What do they follow who worship as His "partners" other than Allāh? They follow nothing but conjecture, and they do nothing but lie." (10:66) It means that "All creatures are subject to Allāh. If, therefore, any false worship is set up, the false gods- so called "partners"- are merely creatures of imagination or false inventions."[472] "Say (O Muhammad): "Of your partners', can any originate creation and repeat it? "Say: "It is Allāh who originates creation and repeats it: then how are you deluded away (from the truth)?" Say: "Of your `partners' is there any that can give any guidance towards Truth?" Say: "It is Allāh who gives guidance towards Truth. Is then He who gives guidance to Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How judge ye? But most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly conjecture can be of no avail against Truth. Verily Allāh is well aware of all that they do." (10:34-36)[473]

Contrary to it, Henry P. Smith observes: "The proposition that Allāh is the only God does not necessarily mean that the other so-called gods have absolutely no existence. This was too radical a step to take all at once. Mohammad conceded the existence of spirits or demons who had seduced men to their worship. The Arabic word for these beings is *Jinn* (collective)..."[474] Such claims, especially in the face of the above quoted passages of the Qur'ān, are unjustified and misleading.

It must be said at the outset, that the Qur'ān has never denied the existence of those who are worshipped by pagans either from the human beings or Jinn, as realities that exist or have existed in the past. A good example to elaborate the point will be that of the person of Jesus, the son of Mary. Therefore, the existence as God's creation of those worshipped by certain people, is not in question. What is being denied by the Qur'ān is the fact of their existence as divinities capable of benefit or harm, independently of God. When the Qur'ān confirms the existence of spirits like jinns, devils, and angels, it does not leave any stone unturned to describe their existence as powerless creatures of God owing all what they have to the power of God. They do not have any power of themselves. They exercise whatever is permitted to them by God, hence having no share in the divinity at all. For instance, about the Jinn [475] the Qur'ān says: "And the Jinn race, We had created before, from the fire of a scorching wind." (15:27) "And He created Jinns from fire free of smoke." (55:15) The jinns have been granted astonishing physical capabilities (27:39; 34:12-13; 21:82; 38:37) that differentiate them from ordinary human beings. On the other hand, just like the human beings, the jinns are created for the purpose of worshipping God. "I have only created the jinns and men, that they may serve Me." (51:57) There are among them who believe (46:29-32), and others who reject the truth (6:112; 7:38,179; 41:29).[476] Likewise, the jinns will be held answerable (for their deeds) on the Day of Judgment (6:128; 11:119; 72:15).

The angels are also God's creation and His servants. "And they make into females angels who themselves are servants of the most Gracious...." (43:19) Contrary to the jinns and men, the angels are obedient to God's commands by nature. "They are (but) servants raised to honor. They speak not before He speaks, and they act (in all things) by His command. He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those with whom He is well-pleased and they stand in awe and reverence of His (glory)." (21:26-28) The difference between the jinns and the angels is, that like mankind the jinns are created with free will, while the angels are otherwise. The Devil (*Iblīs*) was "one of the Jinns, and he broke the Command of his Lord..." (18:50) Like Jinns, the Satan was created out of fire (7:12). Due to acts of submission, he was allowed to worship God in the company of the angels. Neither before rejection nor after expulsion does he possess any divine powers or abilities. The only power *Iblīs* is allowed to exercise for a specified time is, that of power of persuasion. "(*Iblīs*) said: "O my Lord! give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised." (Allāh) said: "Respite is granted thee till the day of the Time Appointed." (*Iblīs*) said: "O my Lord! because Thou hast thrown me out of the way, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong, except Thy chosen servants among them..." (15:36-40; also see 7:14-17) God made it clear to *Iblīs*, that "For over My servants no authority shalt thou have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee." (15:42) "No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is over those only, who take him as patron and who join partners with Allāh." (16:99-100) In *sūrā Ibrāhīm,* the Qur'ān depicts a dialogue that will take place on the Day of Judgment between the Satan and his followers: "Satan will say, once the matter has been settled: "God has given you a true promise, while I have both promised you and then broken my word with you. I had no authority over you except that I appealed to you, and you responded to me. Do not blame me but blame yourself! I have no claim on you nor have you any claim on me..." (14:22)

It is evident, that although the Qur'ān does not deny the existence of the above discussed beings as creatures of God subject to His power, discipline, and justice, it categorically rejects their claim to any power or ability as divine beings. There is no divine but One Almighty God (6:100-102). On the other hand, their worshippers worship them as having share in divine powers and abilities. This act of worship, and belief in their divine capabilities, according to the Qur'ān, is mere conjecture on the part of the worshippers. Therefore Smith's other statement, that "Mohammad admitted that the false gods have a real existence. What he denied was not their reality but their divinity-their power to help or harm",[477] is closer to the reality, but still misleading. It must be qualified with the proper qualifier that the existence of such beings as gods is rejected, while their existence as God's creatures, worshipped wittingly or unwittingly by others, is affirmed. (See 5:116-118; 6:22; 10:28; 25:17; 34:40; 46:6;)

Izutsu elaborates this point by observing, that "In the Arab conception, an angel was an invisible spiritual being somewhat in the nature of a god or superior jinni, worthy to be venerated and even worshipped, but with no definite place in the hierarchy of the supernatural beings... To this conception Islam brought a profound change of far-reaching consequence for the Weltanshauung of the Arabs. With the establishment of an entirely new theocentric system, a definite place was assigned to the angels in the hierarchy of beings. Moreover, the angels themselves were classified into several categories in accordance with their functions and, thus, an angelic hierarchy was formed within the universal hierarchy of being."[478] He further observes: "More important still, the angels ceased to be themselves an object of adoration and worship; now they were but simple creatures of God, differing in no way from human beings in this respect, and they were naturally so made exactly as men were to worship God, to be humble and obedient servants of God... Thus we see the angels, without ceasing to be celestial beings belonging to a higher ontological order than mankind, degraded to the position of mere servants or slaves of Allāh in much the same way as ordinary human beings. If this the case with the angels how much more should this be the case with *jinn*. These have also been originally and essentially created to serve and worship Allah; there can be no difference at all in this important respect between jinn and human beings."[479]

It is evident by now, that the Qur'ān does not affirm or even allow to affirm the existence of any god or divinity besides God. All whatever is other than God is His creation. No one possesses any power or ability except with the permission of God. Those whom people worship other than God, are mere creations of their followers imagination. We conclude this part of the discussion again with Izutsu who puts the point in a nutshell: "In the Koranic system, too, there is the concept of *āliha*.. We must not confuse the ontological order of things with the semantic one. In other words, the fact that the Koranic world is essentially monotheistic should not lead us into thinking erroneously that *semantically* as well as ontologically, Allāh stands alone without any peers. On the contrary, there *are* concepts of "gods" and "idols" in the Koranic system. Only, all these stand in negative relation to Allah; they are there simply as something the existence of which must be denied most emphatically. Speaking in more semantical terms, they are there in the Koran to be connected with the concept of "falsehood" *bāṭil,* while the concept of Allāh is to be connected with that of "truth" *ḥaqq*."[480] He further observes, that "In the realm of the supernatural beings, the acknowledgment of the position of Allāh as the sole Lord of the whole universe deprived... all the other so-called gods (*ālihah*) of all reality. They were now "mere names", not corresponding to any real entities existing outside of language. In the terminology of modern semantics, we

should say that in this conception the term *ilāh* (pl. *ālihah*), when applied to anything other than Allāh Himself is nothing but a word having connotation but no denotation."[481]

Furthermore, the Qur'ān brings the point home through various arguments from creation. Almighty God is the Creator. He has created the heavens and the earth and all what is in the universe. He is the sole Sustainer. "It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; then He turned to the heaven and made them into seven firmaments. And all things He hath perfect knowledge." (2:29) "Praise be to Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth, and made the Darkness and the Light. Yet those who reject Faith hold (others) as equal with their Guardian Lord. He it is Who created you from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you). And there is with Him another determined term; yet ye doubt within yourself! And He is Allāh in the heavens and in earth, He knoweth what you hide, and what ye reveal, and He knoweth the (recompense) which ye earn (by your deeds)." (6:1-3) "It is Allāh Who hath created the heavens and the earth and sendeth down rain from the skies, and with it bringeth our fruits wherewith to feed you; it He Who hath made the ships subject to you, that you may sail through the sea by His Command; and the rivers (also) hath He made subject to you. And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the Night and the Day hath He (also) made subject to you. And He giveth you of all that ye ask for. But if ye count the favors of Allāh, never will ye be able to number them. Verily, man is given up to injustice and ingratitude." (14:32-34) "He has created the heavens and the earth with truth; far is He above having the partners they ascribe to Him." (16:3 also see 7:54, 185; 9:36; 10:3, 5, 6; 14:19; 25:2, 59; 30:8; 31:10)

The Qur'ān then inquires "...*Such is the Creation of* Allāh*: now show Me what is there that others besides Him have created: nay, but the transgressors are in manifest error." (31:10)* "Say: "Have ye seen (these) `partners' of yours whom ye call upon besides Allāh? *Show me what it is thay have created in the (wide) earth. Or have they a share in the heavens?* Or have We given them a Book from which they (can derive) clear (evidence)?- Nay, the wrong-doers promise each other nothing but delusions." (35:40) "Say: "Do ye see what it is ye invoke besides Allāh? *Show me what it is they have created on earth, or have they a share in the heavens?* Bring me a Book (revealed) before this, or any remnant of knowledge (ye may have), if ye are telling the truth! And who is more astray than one who invokes, besides Allāh, such as will not answer him to the Day of Judgment, and who (in fact) are unconscious of their call (to them)? And when mankind are gathered together (at the Resurrection), they will be hostile to them and deny that (men) had worshipped them." (46:4-6) "Those whom they invoke besides Allāh create nothing and are themselves created. (They are things) dead, lifeless: nor do they know when they will be raised up." (16:20-21) Mawdūdī observes, that "The words of this verse make it quite plain that the false gods whose godhead is being denied and refuted here are not angels or *jinn* or Satan or idols made of wood and stone. Instead, they are human beings who at some stage in the past were consigned to graves. This is so because both angels and devils are alive. Hence the Qur'ānic description of them as those `who are dead, not living' does not apply to them. Likewise, the statement that `they do not even know when they will be resurrected' also excludes the images made of wood and stone as objects of worship. Hence, the expression `those whom they call upon besides Allāh' inevitably refers to the people of the past- to Prophets, saints, martyrs, righteous men, and all human beings of extraordinary stature whom their devotees call upon for the fulfillment of their needs...."[482]

In *sūra al-Anbiyā,* the Qur'ān puts the point in a nutshell: "O men! Here is a parable set forth! Listen to it! Those on whom, besides Allāh, ye call, cannot create (even) a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition! They do not have right estimate of Allāh, for Allāh is Powerful and Mighty." (22:73) The conclusion Qur'ān wants people to derive from this, is simple and straightforward: "Is then He Who creates like one that creates not? Will ye not receive admonition?" (16:17) "This argument", observes Mawdūdī, "is addressed to polytheists. The polytheists believe-as did the polytheists of Makka and elsewhere-that God alone is the creator of the universe. They also acknowledge that the deities whom they associate with God have created nothing. This being so, how can those who have no share in creation have the same authority as God in the realm of His own creation? How can those who have not created have the same rights as God against His creatures? How can one be led to believe that the Power of Him Who creates is the same as the power of those who have not created? Or that the Creator and the created belong to the same species so much so that the relationship between Creator and created might be that of parent and offspring."[483]

Another contrast is that of responding to the prayers. The true and the only God guides, listens, and responds to the prayers. He is the only one helps those in need. "Our Lord is the One Who has given everything its own constitution; then guided it." (20:50; also see 2:143, 213; 6:90, 149; 7:43,178; 16:9; 63:11; 35:8 etc.)[484] "When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I respond to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way." (2:186) Al-Ṭabarī relates on the authority of Ḥasan al-Baṣarī, that a man asked the Prophet, "Is our Lord near that we can pray to Him in private or is He far that we cannot cry out to Him?" The verse was therefore revealed.[485] Ibn Kathīr relates, that some of the Prophet's companions asked him, "Where is our Lord?" This verse was revealed in response to that question.[486] Al-Buhkārī relates from Abū Mūsā, "We were in the company of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on a journey, and whenever we ascended a high place, we used to say Takbīr (*Allāhu Akbar* meaning God is the Most Great) (in a loud voice). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "O people! be kind to yourself, for you are not calling upon a deaf or an absent one, but you are calling an All-Hearer, and an All-Seer...."[487] Ibn 'Arabī gives this verse a great mystical significance *vis a vis* man -God relationship and man's quest for Him: " If my servants who are journeying toward me 'ask you concerning' knowledge of 'me,' `certainly I am near' and manifest. 'I answer the prayers of the suppliant when he calls upon me' with the tongue of his state and potential by granting him what his state and potential require. 'Let them therefore answer my call' by purifying their potential with asceticism and acts of worship. For to myself do I call them in order that I may teach them how to journey to me. Let them behold me when they are in the state of purity so that I may manifest myself in the mirrors of their hearts. This, in order that they may be well guided in rectitude and achieve goodness in themselves."[488]

In *sūra Ghafir,* it says: "And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your prayer..." (40:60) Abū Hurayrah narrates a *Hadīth Qudsī* (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad as revealed to him by the Almighty)[489] from the Prophet, that Almighty Allāh says: "I am as My servant thinks I am (another possible rendering of the Arabic is: "I am as My servant expects Me to be"). I am with

him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself: and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length, and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed."[490] Therefore, narrates Anas bin Mālik, that "To call upon God is the essence of worship." Unlike other gods, narrates Abu Hurayrah, "Almighty God gets angry with the one Who does not call upon Him."[491]

Contrary to that, the false gods neither guide nor listen. They do not and cannot respond to the prayers. "To Him alone should all prayer be addressed, *for those to whom they do address their prayers besides Him are altogether powerless to respond to them. The example of praying to any other than Allāh is that of a man who stretches out his hands to water, asking it to reach his mouth, although water has no power to reach his mouth. The prayers of the unbelievers are a sheer waste."* (13:14)[492] *"And those whom you invoke besides Him own not a straw. If you invoke them they will not listen to your call, and if they were to listen, they cannot answer your (prayer). On the Day of Judgment they will reject your "Partnership". And none, (O Man!) can inform you like Him who is All-Aware." (35:14)* "And who is more astray than one who invokes, beside Allāh, such as will not answer him to the Day of Judgment, and who (in fact) are unconscious of their call (to them)." (46:5) Izutsu observes, that "The Divine response to the human *du`ā* is signified in the Koran by the word *istijābah* meaning literally "answering" being ready in response." Semantically we may describe this by saying that the concept of *du`ā* stands in correlation with that of *istijābah*. Unlike *du`ā*, which is essentially verbal, *istijābah* is non-verbal. In the Koran, God Himself declares positively that He is always ready to "answer" if only men call upon Him sincerely.... Moreover, the Koran attaches the highest importance to the concept of *istijābah*, as is evident from the fact that it makes the incapacity for *istijābah* one of the most salient marks of false god. The gods whom the Kāfirs worship apart from Allah *cannot* respond to their *du`ā*, however much the worshippers call upon them. They do not hear the Kāfirs prayer, and even if they did, they would not able to answer anything."[493]

The true God is the true sovereign. He helps whomsoever He pleases, benefits whomsoever He wants, and causes harm to whosoever deserves so. "There is no victory except from Allāh, the Exalted, the Wise." (3:126) "If Allāh helps you, none can overcome you: if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? In Allāh, then, let Believers put their trust." (3:160) "If Allāh touch thee with affliction, none can remove it but He; if He touch thee with happiness, He hath power over all things. He is Irresistibly Supreme over His servants. And He is the Wise, Acquainted with all things." (6:17-18) "If Allāh afflicts you with any hardship, none other than He can remove it; and if He will any good for you, none can avert His bounty. He bestows good upon whomsoever of His servants He will. He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." (10:106) "What Allāh out of His Mercy doth bestow on mankind none can withhold: what He doth withhold, none can grant apart from Him: And He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom." (35:2) The Prophet said: "Be mindful of Allāh, and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allāh; if you seek help, seek help of Allāh. Know that if the Nations were to gather together to benefit you with anything, it would benefit you only with something that Allāh had already prescribed for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with anything, they would harm you only with something Allāh had already prescribed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pāges have dried."[494]

In contrast, the false gods can neither benefit nor cause harm. "They call upon such deities, besides Allāh, as can neither hurt nor profit them: that is straying far indeed (from the Way)! They call on one whose hurt is nearer than his profit: evil, indeed, is the patron, and evil the companion (for help)!" (22:12-13) "Say: "Call on those- besides Him- whom ye fancy: they have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them" (17:56) "Say: "Call upon other (gods) whom you fancy, besides Allāh: they have no power,- not the weight of an atom,- in the heavens or on earth: no (sort of) share have they therein, nor is any of them a helper to Allah." (34:22) "They serve, besides Allāh, what can hurt them not profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allāh." Say: "Do ye indeed inform Allāh of something he knows not, in the heavens or on earth?- Glory to Him! and far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him!" (10:18) "And those whom they invoke besides Allāh have no power of intercession;- only he who bears witness to the Truth, and with full knowledge." (43:86; also see 10:106; 25:55; 21:66; 6:71; 5:76). Actually the false gods do not posses the power to benefit or harm themselves: "Say: "Do ye then take (for worship) protectors other than Him, such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves? Say: "Are the blind equal with those who see? Or the depths of darkness equal with Light? Or do they assign to Allāh partners who have created (anything) as He has created, so that the creation seemed to them similar? Say: "Allāh is the Creator of all things: He is the One, the Supreme and Irresistible." (13:16) "Yet have they taken, besides Him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created: that have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor can they control Death nor Life nor Resurrection." (25:3) If they are unable to help themselves, how could they help anybody else. "Do they indeed ascribe to Him as partners things that can create nothing, but are themselves created? No aid can they give them, nor can they aid themselves....Verily those whom ye call upon besides Allāh are servants like unto you: call upon them, and let them listen to your prayer, if you are (indeed) truthful!... But those ye call upon besides Him, are unable to help you, and indeed to help themselves." (7:191-197; also see 21:42; 36:75)

From the above discussion, it becomes evident that the Qur'ān has categorically refuted all kinds of polytheism in addition to vigorously affirming the Deity and Godhead of the One God. In the Qur'ān, observes Afzalur Rahman, "Just as the concept of Tawḥīd is presented with strong and convincing arguments, likewise polytheism is rejected with strong and irrefutable evidence."[495] The Qur'ān does not confine itself to mere assertions of God's Oneness, Unity, and absolute Sovereignty. It uses various arguments and methods to substantiate such claims. It safeguards an already self-explaining and convincing concept with additional measures and parameters so as to allow no doubt or confusion concerning it. As the belief in a strict monotheism is the primordial act needed for the salvation of the entire humanity, the Qur'ān presents such a belief it in a very simple, straightforward, and logical way. The countless Qur'ānic passages delineating this belief, do not need external help to elaborate the point of their emphasis, they are self-explanatory and self-sufficient in this regard.

Al-Tawḥīd:

The act of declaring such an external as well as internal unity of God is described in Islam by the word "*tawḥīd*". Tawḥīd, observes L. Gardet, "is the verbal noun of the second form of the root

whd, which indicates the action of unifying, of conferring unity. Etymologically it designates the knowledge one has of the unity of a thing."[496] Although the word *tawḥīd* is non-Qur'ānic, it does appear in the authentic sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.[497]

Later, when the religious sciences developed in the Islamic community, the particular science of *`Ilm al-Kalām* (the science of the Word of God or about God, which we will have the opportunity to discuss later in the chapter),[498] was also called *`Ilm al-tawḥīd* (the science of divine unicity). However, when the term *Tawḥīd* is used in reference to Almighty God it "means the realizing and maintaining of Allāh's unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him. It is the belief that Allāh is One, without partner in His dominion and His actions (*Rubūbiyyah*), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (*Asmā wa Ṣifāt*), and One without rival in His divinity and in worship (*Ulūhiyyah/`Ibādah*). These three aspects form the basis for the categories into which the science of *Tawḥīd* has been traditionally divided. The three overlap and are inseparable to such a degree that whoever omits any one aspect has failed to complete the requirements of *Tawḥīd*." [499]

These three categories of *Tawḥīd*, are sometimes named as *Tawḥīd al-Dhāt, Tawḥīd al-Ṣifāt* and *Tawḥīd al-Af`āl*. M. Ali explains that "The Unity of God, according to the Holy Qur'ān, implies that God is One in His person (*dhāt*), One in His attributes (*ṣifāt*) and One in His works (*af`āl*). His oneness in His person means that there is neither plurality of gods, nor plurality of persons in the Godhead; His Oneness in attributes implies that no other being possesses one or more of the Divine attributes in perfection; His Oneness in works implies that none can do the works which God has done, or which God may do."[500] It may be added here, that this tripartite division of *Tawḥīd* owes its origin to the Qur'ān as its material is wholly Qur'ānic, though the specific names mentioned above have resulted from the later theological expositions.[501]

Already we have discussed several passages of the Qur'ān that give detailed description of the concept of *Tawḥīd* in Islamic Scripture without alluding to the above mentioned categories. Here we will expand upon these three aspects of *Tawḥīd* and what they imply, to show how meticulously the Qur'ān has explained and safeguarded the absolute monotheism and divine transcendence, and how such an elaborated and transcendental concept of the Deity differs from other faith traditions.

1:***Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*** or Oneness of Lordship: This kind of *Tawḥīd* means to accept Almighty God as the only "*Rabb*". The word "*Rabb*", as al-Iṣfahānī tells us, combines two senses; that of "fostering, bringing up, or nourishing, and that of regulating, completing, and accomplishing"[502] To al-Iṣfahānī, the usage of the word *Rabb* signifies "the fostering of a thing in various stages and conditions until it attains perfection."[503] Mawdūdī quotes many examples from the Arabic literature to conclude that the word "*Rabb*" entails the following meanings:
1: One who brings up, rears, fosters or nourishes, or is responsible for doing all or one or more than one of these;
2: Guardian, patron; one who supervises or is responsible for carrying out improvements;
3: One who occupies a central or focal position, who himself gathers people round himself of his own or round whom people gather of themselves;

4: Leader, head, chief, or lord; one whose word is obeyed, and whose supremacy or overlordship acknowledged, and who has authority to dispose of men or things;
5: Owner; master.[504]
Mawdūdī also quotes several Qur'ānic verses to show that the Qur'ān has used the word *"Rabb"* in all the above mentioned senses.[505]

Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah, then, means to accept Almighty God not only as the Creator but also the only Sustainer, the Nourisher, the Lord, the Master, the Sovereign, the Supreme Authority. Therefore, when a Muslim is asked to affirm that "There is no Deity but One God", he is being asked to state that there is no other Creator and Sustainer of the universe, no other Ruler nor Law-Giver, no other Reality that can harm or benefit, give or withhold, cause life or death, except with the permission of God Almighty. He creates and sustains creation out of His mercy, without any need for it. Nobody can challenge His sovereignty. He is such an exalted Lord who is not accountable to anyone, while everybody else is accountable to Him, "He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)." (21:23)

The passages expressing *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* prevail throughout the Qur'ān. The first Qur'ānic revelation contained the very core of *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*: "Read in the name of thy Lord and cherisher, who created, created man, out of a clot: Proclaim! and thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, taught man that which he knew not." (96:1-5) The first chapter of the Qur'ān, called **al-Fātiḥa,** starts with the same message: "Praise be to Allāh the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds: Most Gracious, Most Merciful" (1:2-3) The formula "Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds", occurs 41 times in the Qur'ān in addition to *sūra* **al-Fātiḥa**. "Say: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allāh, the Cherisher of the Worlds: No partner hath He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit to His Will. Say: "Shall I seek for (my) Lord other than Allāh. When He is the Cherisher of all things (that exist)?" (6:162-64) "Your Guardian Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then He settled Himself on the Throne: He draweth the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession: and the sun, the moon, and the stars, (all) are subservient by His Command. Verily His are the creation and the Command, Blessed be Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!" (7:54) Ibn Kathīr narrates from Ibn `Abbās, Mujāhid, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Shawkānī narrates from ibn Abī Ḥātim, that the six days mentioned in the above passage are not the days of week known to us. These are days of God's scale where each day is equal to a thousand years. The Qur'ān tells us, "A Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning." (22:47)[506] The verse to both Ibn Kathīr and al-Shawkānī, denotes that the absolute rule, supreme authority, sovereignty, and unrestricted right of disposal belongs to Almighty God alone.[507]

Mawdūdī emphasizes the point by observing that "the main thrust of the verse is that God is not just the creator of the universe, but is also its sovereign and ruler; that after creating the universe He did not detach Himself from, nor become indifferent to, His creation. On the contrary, He effectively rules over the universe as a whole as well as every part of it. All power and sovereignty rest with Him. Everything in the universe is fully in His grip and is subservient to His will. Every atom is bound in obedience to Him. The fate of everything existent is in His Hands." He further argues that, "Thus the Qur'ān undermines the very basis of the misconception which leads man at

times to polytheism, at others to self-glorification and so to rebellion against God. This is the natural corollary of considering God divorced from the affairs of the universe. In such cases, there are two possibilities. One, that beings other than God are considered to have the power to make or mar man's destiny. Here, man is bound to turn to those beings in devotion and subservience. The second possibility is for man to consider himself as the master of his own destiny. Here, man considers himself independent of, and indifferent to, any higher being. It is significant that the words and figures of speech employed by the Qur'ān to denote the relationship between God and man are closely related to kingship, dominion, and sovereignty. This is too conspicuous a fact to be missed by any careful student of the Qur'ān...."[508] S. Quṭb observes, that it is God "Who possesses the creation and the Command. As there is no creator with Him, there is no one to share the authority with Him. This is the thrust of this verse i.e., the issue of the Oneness of Almighty God in His Divinity, the Lordship, and the Sovereignty...."[509]

The concept of God's absolute Sovereignty and Lordship is so prevalent in the Qur'ān that no reader can read the Qur'ān and miss it. "Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, declares the Praises and Glory of Allāh: for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. *To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth:* it is He Who gives Life and Death; and He has Power over all things. He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden: and Has full knowledge of all things. He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then He established Himself on the Throne. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allāh sees well all that ye do. *To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: and all affairs go back to Allah.* He merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night; and He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts."(57:1-6) "He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law): each one follows a course for a time appointed. Is not He the Exalted in Power- He Who forgives again and again? He created you (all) from a single Person: then created, of like nature, his mate; and He sent down eight head of cattle in pairs: He creates you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness. *Such is Allāh, your Lord and Cherisher: to Him belongs (all) dominion.* There is no god but He: then how are ye turned away (from your true Lord)? (39:5-6; see also 2:107; 3:26, 189; 5:17, 18, 40, 120; 9:116; 17:111; 24:42; 42:49; 43:85; 45:27; 48:14; 64:1; 67:1; 85:9)

The same point is brought home with other examples: "It is Allāh Who causeth the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causeth the living to issue from the dead. And He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allāh: then how are ye deluded away from the truth? He it is that cleaveth the day-break (from the dark): He makes the night for rest and tranquillity, and the sun and moon for the reckoning (of time): such is the judgment and ordering of (Him), the Exalted in Power, the Omniscient. It is He Who maketh the stars (as beacons) for you, that ye may guide yourselves, with their help, through the dark spaces of land and sea: We detail Our Signs for people who know. It is He Who hath produced you from a single soul: then there is a resting place and a repository: We detail Our Signs for people who understand. It is He Who sendeth down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce, close-compounded grain out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are)

gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are Signs for people who believe." (6:95-99; also see 13:2-4)[510]

Almighty God is the creator of mankind as He is the creator of everything else in the universe. "O mankind! if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a clot, then out of morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (our power) to you; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes, then (foster you) that you may reach your age of full strength; and some of you are called to die, and some are sent back to the feeblest old age, so that they know nothing after having known (much)...." (22:5; also see 2:21; 6:2; 16:4,70; 30:20,40; 35:11; 37:96; 40:67; 55:14 etc.) K. L. Moore, a Professor of Anatomy at the University of Toronto, was "amazed at the scientific accuracy of these statements which were made in the 7th century A.D."[511] Moore has discussed various verses from the Qur'ān and shown their scientific accuracy. According to him, the stages of human embryos delineated by this Qur'ānic verse in the 7th century, were "not proposed until the 1940' (Streeter, 1942), and the stages used nowadays...were not adopted worldwide until a few years ago (O'Rahilly, 1972; Nishimura *et al.*, 1974)."[512] He concludes: "The agreement I have found between statements in the Koran and sayings in the Hadith may help to close the gap between science and religion which has existed for so many years."[513]

Moreover, human beings are not left at the mercy of the nature or any other agency. The Qur'ān insists that after their creation, it is He and He alone Who provides for them. "It is Allāh Who has created you; further, He has provided for you your sustenance..." (30:40) "For Allāh is He Who gives (all) Sustenance,- Lord of Power,- Steadfast (for ever)." (51:58) "Allāh enlarges the sustenance (which He gives) to whichever of His servants He pleases; and He (similarly) grants by (strict) measure, (as He pleases): for Allāh has full knowledge of all things." (29:62; also see 13:26; 16:71; 17:30; 28:82; 30:37: 34:36,39; 39:52; 42:12) In His hand is power and honor, "Say: O Allāh! Lord of Power (and Rule), thou givest Power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off Power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honor whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: in Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power. Thou causest the Night to gain on the day, and Thou causest the day to gain on the Night; Thou bringest the Living out of the Dead, and Thou bringest the Dead out of the Living; and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure." (3:26-27) "He is Irresistibly, Supreme over His servant and He sets guardians over you...." (6:61) Mawdūdī translates this verse as follows: "And He alone holds sway over His servants and sets guardians over you till death approaches any of you and Our deputed angels take his soul, neglecting no part of their task."[514]

In short, to Him belongs the creation, to Him belongs the dominion (*al-mulk*), to Him belongs the Command (*al-Amr*), and to Him belongs the rule (*al-Ḥukm* 6:57, 62; 12:40,67; 13:41; 28:70,88; 40:12). Nobody has shared the creation, "I called them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, not (even) their own creation: nor is it for Me to take as helpers such as lead (men) astray!" (18:51) No one can share His dominion and actions, "Say: "Praise be to Allāh, Who

begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion: nor (needs) He any to protect Him from humiliation: yea, magnify Him for His greatness and glory!" (17:111)

Furthermore, the Qur'ān insists that the idea of Oneness of the Divine Lordship is ingrained in human nature. That is due to the covenant the humans had made with God prior to coming to this existence. "And recall (O Prophet) when your Lord brought forth descendants from the loins of the sons of Adam, and made them witnesses against their ownselves, asking them: `Am I not your Lord?' They said: `Yes, we do testify.' "(7:172) Mawdūdī explains the verse by observing: "This event, according to several traditions, took place at the time of the creation of Adam. Apart from the prostration of the angels before Adam and the proclamation that man would be God's vicegerent on earth, all the future progeny of Adam were gathered, and were endowed with both existence and consciousness in order to bear witness to God's lordship. The best interpretation of this event is found in a statement by `Ubayy b. Ka`b, who has probably given the substance of what he had heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him)." Mawdūdī quotes `Ubayy's report that informs that, "God gathered all human beings, divided them into different groups, granted them human form and the faculty of speech, made them enter into a covenant, and then making them witnesses against themselves He asked them: `Am I not your Lord?' they replied: `Assuredly you are Our Lord.' Then God told them: `I call upon the sky and the earth and your own progenitor, Adam, to be witness against you lest you should say on the Day of Judgment that you were ignorant of this...."[515]

This covenant is the "*Fiṭrah*" (nature), which the Qur'ān refers to in the verse of *sūra al-Rūm:* "The nature in which Allāh has made mankind: no change (there is) in the work (wrought) by Allāh: that is the true Religion: but most among mankind know not." (30:30) The Prophet emphasized the same when he said: "Every child is born with the nature (*`alā al-Fiṭrah*)...."[516] M. Asad observes, that "According to the Qur'ān, the ability to perceive the existence of the Supreme Power is inborn in human nature (*fitrah*); and it is this instinctive cognition- which may or may not be subsequently blurred by self-indulgence or adverse environmental influences- that makes every sane human being "bear witness about himself" before God. As so often in the Qur'ān, God's "speaking" and man's "answering" is metonym for the creative act of God and of man's existential response to it."[517]

Al-Shawkānī interprets the above mentioned event as allegorical,[518] and Ibn Kathīr narrates from Ḥasan al-Baṣarī a report that amounts to same.[519] Mawdūdī, on the other hand, argues that "this was narrated in such a way as to suggest that the event did actually take place. We do not subscribe to this allegorical interpretation of the primordial covenant of man with God. For both the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* recount it not only as an actual happenings, but also affirm that the covenant would be adduced as an argument against man on the day of judgment. There remains, therefore, no ground whatsoever to interpret the event in terms of mere allegory...."[520]

In short, the Qur'ānic sense of the Oneness of Divine Lordship means to accept Almighty God as the only Creator, and the Sustainer who after creating everything other than Him is continuously sustaining the creation by active involvement in their affairs, including the world of men. All that exists or takes place is the expression of His power and will from the behavior of each atom of matter to the large-scale occurrences of human history to events of cosmic proportion. His is the

creation and His is the rule and sovereignty. Nobody has any share in any of these acts of "Lordship".

Izutsu rightly observes, that "In the Islamic system, on the contrary, creation marks just the beginning of the Divine rule over the created things. All human affairs even the minutest and apparently most insignificant details of life are put under the strict supervision of Allāh. And the most important point about this is that this God, according to the Koran, is the God of Justice, who never does any wrong (*ẓulm*) to anybody."[521] Therefore, it can be stated that the *Tawḥīd* of Divine Lordship places God as over and above this universe of man and matter, as their Creator, Sustainer, and Master, and not as someone bound to any of the limitations of this utilitarian sphere of here and now.

*2: **Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*** (The Unity of Worship or *'Ibādah*): To accept and believe that there is no "*Ilāh*" (deity) other than the Almighty Lord and worship Him alone is the core of ***Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah***.[522] As was seen earlier, the word *al-Ilāh* in the Arabic language means the one who is "*al-Ma'lūh*" i.e., *al-Ma'būd* (worshipped.)[523] *Al-'Ibādah* means "utmost humbleness, extreme self-abasement, humility, submission, obedience, compliance and service."[524] Ibn al-Qayyam defined it as, "the perfect love accompanied with total submission."[525] Therefore, *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* denotes sincere and unadulterated inner as well as external worship of God, absolute sense of dependence upon and devotion to Him and Him alone with the exclusion of everything other than Him. This second kind of *al-Tawḥīd* eliminates all possibilities of associationism. In spite of the wide range of implications contained in the first category of ***al-Tawḥīd***, firm belief in Oneness of the Divine Lordship is not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the Qur'ānic concept of *Tawḥīd* or monotheism. It must be accompanied with a strong faith in the Oneness of Divine worship, devotion, and obedience, in order for *Tawḥīd* to be completed. This point is substantiated by the fact that the Qur'ān vehemently attacked the belief system of the people of Makka and dubbed them as "*Mushrikūn*" (polytheists), in spite their confirming of many aspects of the Oneness of Divine Lordship.

The Qur'ān tells us about the polytheists of Mecca, that "If you should ask who created heavens and earth, *they would say, "God"*. Say: "Praise be to God!" However most of them do not realize it. God owns whatever is in Heavens and Earth: God is Transcendent, Praiseworthy." (31:25-26; also see 39:38;)[526] Abdullah Yususf Ali observes: "Men will acknowledge that Allāh created the heavens and the earth, and yet fail to understand the love and goodness of Allāh in continuing to cherish and maintain them with His gifts. Even if they allow this, they sometimes yet fall short of the corollary, that He is the only One to be worshipped, and run after their own false gods in the shape of their fancies and lusts. They do not do the duties which, if they rightly understood their own nature and position, they should take a delight in doing."[527] The polytheists of Mecca believed that God is Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge (43:9). They believed that the other natural phenomena like sun and moon are also the creation of God Almighty, "If indeed thou ask them who created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and moon (to His Law", *they will certainly reply, "Allāh"*. How are they then deluded away (from the truth)?" (29:61) They confessed that God is the only source of rain and cultivation, "And if indeed thou ask them who it is that sends down rain from the sky, and gives life to therewith to the earth after its death, *they*

will certainly reply, "Allāh"! Say, "Praise be to Allāh!" But most of them understand not." (29:63) They recognized the fact that they owe their own creation to God Almighty. "If thou ask them, *Who created them, they will certainly say, Allāh:* how then are they deluded away (from Truth)?" (43:87) Sustenance, life, death, and the keys of affairs are all in His hands. "Say: "Who is it that sustains you (in life) from the sky and from the earth? Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs?" *They will soon say, "Allāh"*. Say, "Will ye not then show piety (to Him)?" (10:32) They also confessed that He is the Absolute Lord of the heavens and the earth. "Say: "To whom belong the earth and all beings therein? (say) if ye know!" *They will say, "To Allāh*!" Say: "Yet will ye not receive admonition?" Say: "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne? *They will say, "(They belong) to Allāh."* Say: "Will ye not then fear." Say: "Who is it in whose hands is the sovereignty of all things,- Who protects (all, but is not protected (of any)? (Say) if ye know." *They will say, "(It belongs) yo Allāh."* Say: "Then how are ye deluded?" (23:84-89)

Izutsu observes, that though the Meccans believed in Allāh as the Creator of the universe, this belief did not play a vital role in their daily life. The occurrence of "words like *khalq* "creation", *khāliq* "creator", *bārī* "originator" etc. in pre-Islamic literature should not mislead us into thinking that the concept of Divine Creation was playing a decisive role in the Jahili Weltanschauung... Unlike the Koranic system in which Allāh the Creator governs the entire Weltanshauung Jahiliyyah did not attach great importance to this semantic field... This is tantamount to saying that the idea of Allāh's being the very "source" of human existence, if it *was* there, meant very little to the minds of the pre-Islamic Arabs. And this is why the Koran tries so hard to bring home to them the very significance of this idea and to awaken them to the grave implication of it."[528] Izutsu further elaborates the point by observing, that "In the jahili system, the creative activity of Allāh is both the beginning and the end of His intervention in human affairs. He does not as a rule take care of what He has brought into existence just like an irresponsible father who never cares for his children; the task is taken over, as we have just seen, by another Being called Dahr. In the Islamic system, on the contrary, creation marks just the beginning of the Divine rule over the created things."[529]

In addition to that, the pagans of Makka used to call upon Almighty God in times of distress. "Now, if they embark on a boat, *they call on Allāh, making their devotion sincerely (and exclusively) to Him;* but when He delivered them safely to (dry) land, behold, they give a share (of their worship to others)!" (29:66) "When a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), *they call upon Allāh, offering Him sincere devotion*. But when He has delivered them safely to land, there are among them those that falter between (right and wrong)..." (31:32) Izutsu calls this attitude a "temporary monotheism". He writes, that "in an emergency, when they really felt that their own life was in mortal danger, the pagan Arabs used to have recourse to `temporary monotheism' apparently without any reflection on the grave implication of such an act. That the phrase "making one's religion pure for Allāh" in contexts of this kind means what we might call `momentary-or temporary-monotheism', and not simply "sincerity" or "earnestness" in one's prayer is closely shown by the fact that in the majority of the verses in which this expression is used the Koran adds the remark that these pagans, as soon as they reach the shore and feel sure of

absolute safety, forget about all that has passed and begin again "to ascribe partners to Allāh", i.e., fall back into their original polytheism."[530]

The Qur'ān has elaborated this point in several passages: "He it is who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; till when ye even board ships;-they sail with them with a favorable wind, and they rejoice thereat; then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed: *they pray unto Allāh, sincerely offering (their) duty unto Him, saying, "If Thou dost deliver us from this, we shall truly show our gratitude!* But when He delivereth them, behold! they transgress insolently through the earth in defiance of right!" (10:22-23) In the time of difficulties "*Lo, it is to Him alone that you cry* and then, if He so will, He removes the distress for which you had cried to Him. Then you forget the partners you had set up with Allah." (6:41) `Ikrimah, the son of Abū Jahl was a disbeliever at the time of Makka's conquest. He fled to Jeddah and sailed from there towards Abyssinia. The boat ran into a threatening storm during the voyage. Consequently, people began calling on their gods and goddesses. Mawdūdī observes, "Later on, when the storm grew even worse and the passengers were sure that the boat would sink, they began to feel it was time to call on God alone, for He alone could save them. This opened the eyes of `Ikrimah, whose heart cried out to him that if there was no effective helper for the in that situation, how could there be one elsewhere? He also recalled that this was precisely what the Prophet...had constantly told people...This was a turning-point in `Ikrimah's life...."[531]

Furthermore, the Meccans used to fear and worship Allāh in many ways. They honored the sanctity of Ka`bah, the Sanctuary in Makka,[532] faithfully devoted various types of worship to God, performed Hajj (pilgrimage),[533] recited a kind of "*Talbiyah" (*the monotheistic formula Muslims recite during days of Hajj),[534] served the out of town pilgrims (al-Qur'ān 9:19), offered a kind of prayer,[535] fasted certain days of the year,[536] offered charity in God's name (al-Qur'ān, 6:136), started their writings with the name of Allāh,[537] and sacrificed the animals in His name etc.[538] In spite of all these seemingly monotheistic beliefs and actions, the Qur'ān dubbed them as disbelievers (*Kuffār*) and polytheists (*Mushrikūn*). The reason was nothing other than their associationism. They used to associate others as gods with God, call upon them, worship them and take them as mediators and intercessors between God and His creation. "Instead of God they serve what neither harms nor benefits them, and they say: *"These are our intercessors with God."* (10-18) "Is it not to Allāh that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors others than Allah (say): *"We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allāh."* Truly Allāh will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful. Had Allāh wished to take to Himself a son, He could have chosen whom He pleased out of those whom He doth create: but Glory be to Him! (He transcends such things.) He is Allāh, the One, the Overpowering." (39:3-4)[539] The Meccans lacked purity of worship, and that, to the Qur'ān, is paganism.

That such a kind of religiosity prevailed in the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Muhmmad, is confirmed by the historical research and by the modern scholarship. Joseph Henninger concludes his "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion" with the observation, that "Here then are the elements of this religion: Allāh, creator of the world, supreme and undisputed lord, but relegated to the background in the cultic and practical life of the people; next, manifesting the rudiments of a

polytheism, several *astral divinities* (at least that of the planet Venus) and *atmospheric divinities* (perhaps the attributes of a creator god which have been hypostatized); finally, ancestors and *jinn*, these last having more importance in the belief system than in the cult. All of this, moreover, is somewhat vague and far from being organized into a real pantheon or hierarchical system."[540] Discussing at length the Pre-Islamic formulas of "*Talbiyah*", M. J. Kister concludes, that they give us "clue for a better understanding of the religious ideas of the tribes during the period of the Jāhiliyyah. The tribes of course had their gods and the places of worship of these gods were usually shared by other tribes allied with them or living in their neighborhood. They believed however in a supreme God, who had His House in Mecca. On their pilgrimage to Mecca they directed themselves to this God, who held supremacy over their tribal gods." Kister further observes, that "when intending to perform the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary at Mecca, every tribe would come to (the abode of) their idol and pray there; then they would set out uttering the *talbiya*...until they reached Mecca. This report demonstrates to what extent there prevailed harmonious co-existence and co-operation between the tribal deities and the supreme God of Mecca. The Jāhiliyyah tribes cannot be said to have been straightforward polytheists; they were *mushrikūn*, i.e. while accepting and admitting the existence and supreme authority of God, they associated other deities with Him."[541] F. E. Peters observes, that "Allāh, we can be sure, was neither an unknown nor an unimportant deity to the Qurash when Muhammad began preaching his exclusive worship at Mecca. What is equally certain is that Allāh had what the Qur'ān disdainfully calls "associates," other gods and goddesses who shared both his cult and his shrine." Peter continues observing, that "The processional chant of the pagans of the "Era of Ignorance" was, we are told, "Here I am, O Allāh, here I am; you have no partners except such a partner as you have; you posses him and all that is his." The last clause may reflect what was an emerging tendency toward henotheism, the recognition of Allāh as the "High God" of Mecca... the Quraysh are relentlessly chastised for "partnering God," and from what we otherwise know of Muhammad's Mecca, the charge is not an unjust one."[542]

David Waines gives more details of Meccans belief system: "In pagan eyes, Allāh was the "High God"; neither the sole object of worship nor indeed the sole existent god, he merely stood above, or apart from, all other tribal divinities. Nevertheless, he played a particular role in pagan life. First, as the giver of rain, he ensured the sustenance of life for the inhabitants of this arid desert... Then, as the guarantor of oaths, he was regarded as crucial to the binding nature of agreements, tribal or individuals, sworn in his name; violation of such an oath was deemed a grave offense, as it involved serious consequences for social peace and order." Waines further observes, that, "In a somewhat vague way, too, Allāh was viewed as the creator of the heavens and the earth, although in general no moral conclusions seem to have been drawn from this regarding an individual's behavior and future well-being.... Thus in matters of daily concern, Allāh occupied a particular place, but alongside other gods in the Arab's pantheon."[543] These other gods like Lāt, Manāt, `Uzzā, Hubul etc., "were consulted on various matters of domestic and other concerns: setting the date for marriage, confirming the parentage of a child, and the settlement of a quarrel all fell within the purview of the god's advice, as did seeking the most propitious moment to embark upon a journey. Their help was also sought for rain or for assistance in battle against a rival tribe...."[544] K. Armstrong observes: "The shrine [Ka`ba] was also surrounded by 360 idols, or effigies of the gods, that may have been the totems of all different tribes that came to worship there during the appointed month."[545] It was not only in Mecca and around Ka'abah that other

gods were being worshipped. They were celebrated all over the Arabian peninsula, as Armstrong observes: "The Ka'aba was the most important shrine, but there were others....The Arabs may not have worshipped al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat in a personalized way, but ... they felt very passionate about them."[546] It becomes evident that the modern scholarship do not differ much with the Qur'ānic depiction of the Pre-Islamic Arab religion. It also substantiates the claim made earlier that the Qur'ānic concept of monotheism does neither legitimize nor allow worship, devotion, and obedience to other gods besides God. The act of sole worship, absolute devotion, and utmost submission to the One God is more fundamental and intrinsic to the Qur'ānic concept of the Deity than belief in Him as the sole Creator, Sustainer, and Master of the universe. To the Qur'ān, *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* without *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* is mere polytheism. Perhaps there would have not been much opposition to Muhammad's message had it not been for his uncompromising stance against any and every kind of associationism with God. The Qur'ānic concept of the Deity did approve anything lesser than the absolute purity of worship and devotion to the One and Only God. That was the primordial issue and the demarcation line between the Qur'ānic understanding of the Deity and that of the pagan's conception of God. That is what the Meccans knew and argued about: "Has he made gods (all) into One? Truly this is a strange thing!"

Prof. Watt, on the other hand, argues that the Pre-Islamic pagan religion was "the result of a long development. Prominent among the objects worshipped originally were stones and trees. These were sometimes regarded not as the divinities but as their house or dwelling. Latterly abstract characteristics were also associated with them, possibly under foreign influence, and they were thought of as having some connection with heavenly bodies. The nomads appear to have had little serious belief in them, perhaps because they were originally the gods of agricultural communities. In view of the opposition to Muhammad at Mecca it is conceivable that some small groups there- perhaps those specially concerned with certain religious ceremonies- had a slightly higher degree of belief."[547] Watt portrays the Pre-Islamic Arabs as faithless heathens in an effort to emphasize the politico-economic nature of the conflict between the Meccans and the Prophet, and to insinuate that Muhammad's opposition to Meccans was not basically due to their associationism, but mostly due to their faithlessness.

It is perhaps too much to say that the nomad Arabs had little serious belief in their gods because they were originally the gods of agricultural communities. As recognized by Watt himself, their commitment to their gods is evident from the intensity of animosity and opposition they showed to the Qur'ānic message, and the type of sacrifices they made to preserve the ways of their forefathers regarding worship of these deities. It were not only the Meccans who fought the Qur'ānic message with all what they possessed. The entire Arabic community with very few exceptions sided with them in their struggle against Muhammad and his religion. The issue of their gods seemed to be always the major concern that they had brought forth in their dialogue with Prophet Muhammad or his aids.[548] Even before the advent of Islam, the commitment of the majority of Arabs to their gods and goddesses in many aspects of their lives is quite clear. K. Armstrong quotes an incident where Zayd ibn 'Amr was expelled from Mecca by his own brother Khaṭṭāb, merely for criticizing the goddesses. "Zayd ibn 'Amr not only withdrew from the worship at the Ka'aba but was said to have been an outspoken critic of the pagan religion. His half-brother Khattab ibn Nufayl was a devout pagan and was so scandalized by Zayd's apostasy and disrespect for the goddesses that he eventually drove him out of the city. He is said to have organized a

young band of pagan zealots to patrol the hills outside Mecca where Zayd was in hiding and prevent him from entering the Sanctuary." She concludes, that "The story is instructive. It eloquently expresses the questing spirit of some of the Arabs at this time. But it also shows the opposition that anybody who threatened the pagan religion could expect to face. There were many Quraysh like Khattab ibn Nufayl who were devoted to the faith of their fathers and could not bear to hear a word against the old gods and goddesses."[549] However, this observation does not imply high and lofty claims about a developed intellectual system of belief regarding these deities on the part of the Pre-Islamic Arabs. It was not all the same everywhere in Arabia, and not all of them had such a strong and unwavering belief in these gods and their abilities to help that it was never violated. There are several incidents where as a result of a failure or disaster, some of these gods were abandoned, disrespected, and even broken into pieces. *Imru' al-Qays* is a typical example of this attitude. Hitti informs, that "Having set out to avenge the murder of his father he stopped at the temple of *dhul-al-Khalasah* to consult the oracle by means of drawing arrows. Upon drawing `abandon' thrice, he hurled the broken arrows at the idol exclaiming, `Accursed One! had it been thy father who was murdered thou wouldst not have forbidden my avenging him."[550] This sort of disbelief was not due to the fact that these gods were originally gods of agricultural communities or not taken seriously at all times. In reality, the reaction seems to be due to the respect and veneration given to one's honour, tribe, and tribal ties, that were denoted by what was called "*Murūwah*" or "tribal humanism".[551] Watt himself observes that "This was the effective religion of the Arabs of Muhammad's day..."[552] Izutsu explains, that the pre-Islamic Arabs were notorious for the personal qualities like pride in one's power, limitless self-confidence, sense of absolute independence, the unshakable determination not to bow before any authority, whether human or divine. "But far from being moral defects, these represented in their eyes the highest ideal of human virtue, the noblest virtue of a man really worthy of the name of "man" *al-fatā*. For these qualities were all based on, and various manifestation of, the sense of "honor" *`ird* which was deep-rooted in their mentality, and which was, indeed, the highest regulating principle of their conduct. This prominent Jahili quality was variously known as *anafah,* literally "high-nosed-ness", *ibā'* "refusal (i.e. to allow one's honor sullied)", *ḥamiyyah* "zeal for defending what one has to defend"-a word which occurs in the Koran (XLVIII, 26) precisely in this sense in the particular combination of *ḥamiyyah al-Jāhiliyyah* ("the *ḥamiyyah* which is characteristic of the *Jāhiliyyah*") and *ḥafīẓah* "guarding jealously one's honor"." He further observes, that all these words were in use then "to mean the noble quality of a noble man who would proudly refuse to accept anything whatsoever that might degrade his personal dignity, a fierce passionate nature to hurl back with scorn anything which might make him feel humbled and humiliated even in the slightest way."[553] Izutsu rightly argues, that "this fiery spirit of resistance which made man refuse resolutely to submit and surrender to the will of any other man, and to sully thereby his honor was indeed the real fountain-head of almost all jahili human values. This spirit found its expression in various forms everywhere in pre-Islamic poetry. Here is an example which expresses it in the simplest and most straightforward way: ..."We refuse resolutely to submit to another's direction, whoever he may be! On the contrary, we make all men obey our directions, and that without bit and bridle."[554]

In the presence of this pervasive attitude of "high-nosed-ness", it is easy to discern that the archaic religion or gods were some time abandoned or not attended to if the act of their worship stood in the way of *`ird* or personal honor, or realizing a tribal goal or interest. Therefore, Hitti's

observation seems to be more accurate than Watt's claims of the Arab's faithlessness. Hitti observes, that "To spiritual impulses he (the pagan Arab) was luke-warm, even indifferent. His conformity to religious practice followed tribal inertia and was dictated by his conservative respect for tradition."[555] Armstrong observes, that "Nomadic life had been conservative precisely because it was precarious. Nobody, for example, would have dreamed of striking out traditional ways to find a new route to the ancestral wells... they valued their continuity with the past and believed that their success depended on a pious regard for the traditions of their fathers.... Muhammad is constantly accused by his enemies of being a danger to society, of neglecting the religion of the fathers and of atheism..."[556]

It can be inferred that the pre-Islamic Arabs were religious, though maybe not in exactly the same context as the term means in modern times. Their religiosity owed mostly to their enthusiasm for continuity with the past or traditionalism rather than with an intellectually thought-out and developed system of belief. That enthusiasm would fade away if in conflict with their craze for tribal pride or humanism "*Murūwah*". A. H. Siddiqui puts the point in a nutshell: "The Arabs were undoubtedly indifferent towards religion, but that should not lead any one to conclude that they had no notion of religion whatsoever. They have had an idea of an All-Supreme Power controlling the Universe, His wrath and favour, the Life after death and the angels. But all these ideas had been adulterated with idolatry-that yearning of the baser self in a man for a visible object of devotion, something that the eye can see and the hands touch, which finally develops into the worship of the creature more than the Creator."[557] He further argues, that "the Arabs of pre-Islamic period believed in the existence of one Great Deity, but at the same time they entertained the notion that the All-Powerful Lord had delegated His powers to some of His sacred personalities and objects-both animate and inanimate-who serve as the media through which the worshipper could come in contact with Him and thus earn His pleasure. It was under this misconception that they worshipped the idols of saintly persons, heavenly bodies and stones which were sometimes regarded not as divinities, but as the incarnations of Divine Being."[558]

Haykal well summarizes the then situation: "In their worship of idols, the Arabs followed many ways difficult for the modern researcher to discover and understand.... idolatry once enjoyed a position of tremendous importance. The same evidence proves that it was of many kinds, the idolatrous practices were of great variety and that idols differed widely in the degree of sacralization conferred upon them. Every tribe had a different idol which it worshipped... Still unsatisfied by these great idols to which they prayed and offered sacrifices, the Arabs used to adopt other statues or sacred stones for domestic worship and devotion. They used to circumambulate the "holy" precincts of these gods both before leaving on a trip and upon returning home. They often carried their idols with them when they traveled, presuming that the idol had permitted its worshiper to travel."[559] Haykal further observes, that "All these statues, whether in the Ka`bah, around it or scattered around the tribes or the provinces, were regarded as intermediaries between their worshippers and the supreme god. They regarded the worship of them as a means of rapprochement with God even though in reality that same worship had caused them to forget the true worship of God."[560]

It was against such notions of divinity, and not mere faithlessness, that the Qur'ān preached its exclusive monotheism. The monotheism, in which to worship anyone or to take anyone as

mediator or intercessor or to seek help from anyone in religious sense except God was detrimental to the very core of monotheism. "And they have been commanded no more than this: *To worship Allāh, offering Him sincere devotion*, being true (in faith)..." (98:5) "Say: *"I have been ordered to serve God sincerely, [making] religion exclusively His. I have been ordered to be the first of those who submit their will to Him.* Say: "I fear the torment of an awful day if I should disobey my Lord." Say: *"God do I worship sincerely; my religion belongs to Him...." (39:11-14)*

To the Qur'ān, both the above discussed categories of *al-Tawḥīd* are mutually inter-connected. They are the two sides of the same coin. The Qur'ān leads us from the Oneness of Lordship to the Oneness of worship and devotion. "O Men! Remember the grace of Allāh unto you! is there a Creator, other than Allāh, to give you sustenance from heaven or earth? There is no god but He: how then are ye perverted?" (35:3) "On who has created the heavens and the earth, and who sends you down rain from the sky? Yea, with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty and delight: it is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them. (Can there be another) god besides Allāh? Nay, they are a people who swerve from justice. Or, who has made the earth firm to live in; made rivers in its midst; set thereon mountains immovable; and made a separating bar between the two seas (can there be another) god besides Allāh? Nay, most of them know not. Or, who listens to the distressed when he calls on Him, and Who relieves his suffering, and makes you (mankind) inheritors of the earth? (Can there be another) god besides Allāh? Little it is that ye heed! Or, who guides you through the depths of darkness on land and sea, and who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy? (Can there be another) god besides Allāh?- High is Allāh above what they associate with Him! Or, who originates Creation, then repeats it, and who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? (Can there be another) god besides Allāh? Say, "Bring forth your argument, if ye are telling the truth!" (27:60-64; also see 44:7-9) "It is He Who is God in heaven and God on earth... And those whom they invoke besides Allāh have no power of intercession;-only he who bears witness to the Truth, and with full knowledge." (43:84-86)

The conclusion Qur'ān draws from these elaborations is the fact that nobody should worship, devote, call upon, or depend upon anything, humble himself or submit to (in the absolute sense of the words), but to Almighty God i.e., not to take any *ilāh* but the *Ilāh* (God). "Take not with Allāh another god: or thou (O man!) wilt sit in disgrace and destitution." (17:22) "Take not, with Allāh, another object of worship, lest thou shouldst be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected." (17:39) Such an emphasis upon the purity of worship and devotion to God Almighty, in Izutsu's opinion, is "undoubtedly the most 'dramatic' moment of the whole Koranic Divina Commedia."[561]

Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt:

As Almighty God is One, Unique, and incomparable in His Lordship, Sovereignty, and worship, He is also One and Unique in His names and attributes. In Judaism and Christianity, the conception of God is to a greater or lesser extent bound up with the limitations of His creatures as we have seen in the previous chapters. Islam emphatically proclaims that Almighty God, the Transcendent and Exalted Lord and Sustainer of all that exists, is far above possessing any of the

creaturely attributes which have been ascribed to Him. He is not bound to any of the limitations of human beings or any other of His creatures. He has neither form nor body, nor corporeal or physical attributes, features, or characteristics. Rather His attributes are infinite and absolute. They are far above any sort of limitations, defects, deficiencies, such as having a beginning or an end, begetting or being begotten, or physical dimensions or needs such as requiring food, rest, or procreating, for He is the One Who gives such dimensions and characteristics to His creations, while not sharing them in the slightest degree.

Al-Fārūqī argues, that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, constitute successive moments of Semitic consciousness in its long march as the carrier of a divine mission on earth. "While it thus identified with Judaism and Christianity, Islam found fault with them and sought to correct their historical manifestations. The error most grievous to Semitic consciousness and hence least pardonable in the eye of God (Qur'ān 4:47, 155) Islam identified as that of misconceiving the transcendence of God. Judaism and Christianity, it asserted, have made themselves guilty of it; not their primeval form, in the revelations they received from God, but in their historical form, in the texts they accepted as scripture and in their expressions of their faith for the instruction of men."[562] After criticizing a number of biblical passages portraying God in anthropomorphic terms, he further argues, that "Islam also charged that the relation Judaism claimed to bind God to "His People" straight-jacketed Him into granting them favors despite their immorality, their hardship and stiffneckedness (Deuteronomy 9:5-6). A "bound" god, bound in any sense or degree, is not the transcendent God of Semitic consciousness."[563] Likewise, observes al-Fārūqī, the "Christians have committed themselves to divine non-transcendence so resolutely that it had become with them an *idee fixe*, enabling Paul Tillich to declare *sub specie eternitatis* that the transcendent God is unknown and unknowable unless He is recognized in an object of nature and history."[564] He further asserts, that "Since this was the state of "God's transcendence" in Christianity, the language expressing it was equally improper. Although Christians never ceased to claim that God is transcendent, they spoke of Him as a real man who walked on earth and did all things men do, including the suffering of the agonies of death. Of course, according to them, Jesus was both man and God. They never took a consistent position on Jesus' humanity or divinity with accusation of apostasy and heresy. That is why their language is always confusing, at best. When pinned down, every Christian will have to admit that his God is both transcendent and immanent. But his claim of transcendence is *ipso facto* devoid of grounds. To maintain the contrary, one has to give up the laws of logic.... A world of difference separates Islam from Judaism and Christianity on this question."[565]

Contrary to that, Islam emphasizes that God by the very definition of His reality cannot be simply a sort of supernatural or superhuman, directing worldly affair from above the clouds and heavens, while sharing in creaturely attributes, needs, and qualities. For God is nothing less than the Creator, Originator, and Fashioner of this vast universe, the One Who keeps it functioning in accordance with His infinite wisdom, knowledge, and master plans. Therefore, He infinitely transcends anything which the mind can perceive or comprehend, the senses can grasp, imagine, or explain. He is far, far above having any similarity or comparability with any of His creatures. This special emphasis upon the Divine transcendence is what the third category of *al-Tawḥīd* is designated for. God is One in His Names and Attributes. The same emphasis is implied in the first assertion of Islamic creed that "There is no god but God". In addition to being a denial of any

associates to God in His worship, rulership and judgeship of the universe, it also contains a denial of the possibility for any creature to represent, personify, or in any way express the divine Being. The Qur'ān says of God that "He is the Creator of heaven and earth Who creates by commanding the creature to be and it is ... He is the One God, the ultimate... (2:117, 163). There is no God but He, ever-living, ever-active (3:2). May He be glorified beyond any description! (6:100)... No sense may perceive Him (6:103)... Praised be He, the Transcendent Who greatly transcends all claims and reports about Him (17:43). As a result of such an emphasis upon the Divine transcendence, "the Muslims have been all too careful never to associate in any manner possible, any image or thing with the presence of the divine, or with their consciousness of the divine; and in their speech and writing about the divine to use only Qur'ānic language, terms and expressions which, according to them, God has used about Himself in the Qur'ānic revelation."[566]

The Qur'ān gives the basic criterion regarding the transcendence of God in the following verses: "There is nothing whatever like unto Him". (42:11) "And there is none like unto Him." (112:4 as we already have the opportunity to quote and explain it in this chapter), and "knowest thou of any who is worthy of the same Name as He?" (19:65) Establishing these criterion, the Qur'ān represents God as having beautiful names: "Allāh is He, than Whom there is no other god:-Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Allāh is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the justly Proud, Glory to Allāh! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allāh, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (59:-22-24) A. Y. Ali observes that this is "a passage of great sublimity, summing up the attributes of Allāh. In this verse, we have the general attributes, which give us the fundamental basis on which we can form some idea of Allāh. We start with the proposition that there is nothing else like Him. We think of His Unity; all the varying and conflicting forces in Creation are controlled by Him and look to Him, and we can never get a true idea of Him unless we understand the meaning of Unity. His knowledge extends to everything seen and unseen, present and future, near and far, in being and not in being: in fact these contrasts, which apply to our knowledge, do not apply to Him. His Grace and Mercy are unbounded... and unless we realize these, we can have no true conception of our position in the working of His Will and Plan...."[567] These verses have been explained and reflected upon by a great many Qur'ānic exegetes.[568] The recitation of this passage is highly encouraged and said to be carrying great merits.[569] These merits are connected with the Beautiful Names of God that are contained in the passage.

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that "Allāh has ninety-nine Names, one hundred less one; and he who (*aḥsāhā*) memorized them all by heart will enter Paradise." To count something means to know it by heart."[570] The scholars have differed over the meaning of the word *aḥsāhā*. As we have just seen, al-Bukhārī explains it as "counting till somebody memorizes them."[571] Ibn `Aṭiyyah observes that "the meaning of *aḥsāhā* is to count it and to memorize it. The memorization requires to believe in them, honor them, have longing for them, and get lessons from their meanings."[572] Ibn al-Qayyam observes, that *aḥsāhā* means "firstly, to count them and memorize their words; secondly, to understand their meanings and intent; and thirdly, to call upon

God with them, as God has said in the Qur'ān: (The most beautiful names belong to Allāh: so call on Him by them.) (7:180)"[573]

Al-Tirmazī gives a count of these ninety-nine names in a report from Abū Hurayrah.[574] Ibn Ḥazm argues on the basis of such narration, that there are only ninety-nine beautiful names of God and "it is not allowed to add any more name to it because the Prophet said hundred less one."[575] But, the consensus of Muslim scholars is against such a view. They argue that the number ninety-nine should not be taken too literally. It is easy to find more than the above mentioned ninety-nine names of God, both from the Qur'ān as well as from the authentic sayings of the Prophet. Ibn Ḥajar reports such a consensus from al-Nawawī.[576] Part three (chapter one) of Al-Ghazālī's famous book "Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God", is titled: "On Explaining that the names of God most high are not limited to ninety-nine so far as divine instruction is concerned". In this chapter, Ghazālī argues that "Indeed, divine instruction mentions names other than the ninety-nine, since in another version given on the authority of Abū Hurayrah-may the Lord be pleased with him- names closer to these names were substituted for some of them and even some which are not so close.... Furthermore, names are noted in the Qur'ān which do not match with either of the two lists..."[577]

He, like Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyam,[578] argues that the Prophet said: "Whatever distress or affliction that befalls a person, let him say: "O God, I am Your servant, and the son of Your servant, and the son of Your bondsmaid: my forelock is in Your hand, Your judgment concerning me is done. I implore You by every name which is Yours, by which You have named Yourself, or which You revealed in Your book, or which You taught to anyone from Your creation, or which You appropriated to Yourself in Your knowledge of hidden things, that You might make the Qur'ān a renewal of my heart, a light for my inmost thoughts, a way through my affliction, and the unraveling of my distress"; and God-great and glorious- will remove his distress and affliction, and replace them with happiness.' And his saying 'which You appropriated to Yourself in Your knowledge of hidden things' shows that the names are not limited to those mentioned in the well-known versions."[579] Ibn al-`Arabī has given a count of 146 names,[580] Ibn al-Wazīr 173,[581] and Ibn Ḥajar has narrated a report from al-Rāzī that there are 4000 names for God, with the qualification that such a statement cannot be substantiated from the Qur'ān or *Sunnah*.[582] `Umar al-Ashqar has shown that 88 names are mentioned in the Qur'ān itself and 22 more are mentioned in the Ḥadīth.[583] These scholars argue, that although to enumerate these ninety-nine names would suffice to make a person enter paradise, in no way the Divine names are restricted to the number ninety-nine. It is, argues Ghazālī, "like the king who has a thousand servants: one could say that the king has ninety-nine servants, and were one to seek their assistance, no enemy could oppose him. What is specified is the number required to obtain the assistance one needs from them, either because of the addition of their strength, or because that number would suffice to repel the enemy without needing any more; it does not specify that only they exist."[584]

The beautiful names of God can be classified into three main categories. Some of them can be called the "Names of God's essence (*Asmā' al-Dhāt*)", the others as "Names of God's attributes (*Asmā' al-Ṣifāt*), and still others as the "Names of His acts (*Asmā' al-Af`āl*)".[585] The essence (*Dhāt*) of something is its reality, the innermost core that defines what it is. In the case of God,

the question of *Dhāt* means what is God's very self? What is His essence that makes Him God and differentiates Him fundamentally from everything other than Himself? The typical Qur'ānic answer is that God is so unique and transcendent that "Nothing is like unto Him." (42:11) Therefore, God's essence is what He is and what everything else is not. That is what the first category of names intends to explain. Among commonly employed Qur'ānic names, *Allāh* is the most frequently used name. It has occurred in the Qur'ān for 2602 times (980 times *marfū'an* (nominative case), 592 *manṣūban (accusative case)*, 1125 *majrūran (*genitive case*)* and 5 times with the formula *Allāhumma*).[586] Many Muslim scholars and theologians argue, that Allāh is the proper name (*ism `alam*) that God has given to His (*Dhāt*), to Himself. Al-Ghazālī observes, that "it is a name for the true existent, the one who unites the attributes of divinity, is subject of the attributes of lordship, and unique in true existence. For no existent thing other than He may claim to exist itself, but rather it gains existence from Him: it is perishing insofar as it exists of itself, and exists insofar as it faces Him. For every existing thing *is perishing except His face*. It is most likely that in indicating *this* meaning (Allāh) is analogous to proper names, so everything which has been said about its derivation and definition is arbitrary and artificial."[587] Other theologians like Ibn al-Qayyam, and philologists like Saybawayh, prefer to derive it from "*ilāh*", and hold that it means simply "the God".[588]

Among many others, al-Ghazālī argues that Allāh is the greatest of the ninety-nine names of God because, "it refers to the essence which unites all the attributes of divinity, so that none of them is left out, whereas each of the remaining names only refers to a single attribute: knowledge, power, agency, and the rest. It is also the most specific of the names, since no-one uses it for anyone other than Him, neither literally nor metaphorically, whereas the rest of the names may name things other than He, as in 'the Powerful', 'the Knowing', 'the Merciful', and the rest. So in these two respects it seems that this name is the greatest of these names."[589] That is the reason, that most Muslims prefer to use the name Allāh instead of "God" while referring to the Supreme Being. This name transcends the sphere of time, space, and history, and is "so specific that it is inconceivable that it be shared, either metaphorically or literally."[590]

The other names of essence are the one's that describe God's absolute transcendence and negate all kinds of imperfections. *Al-Quddūs* is one of the names of essence. It has occurred in the Qur'ān twice (59:23; 62:1). It means "*the Holy*". Ghazālī observes, that al-Quddūs is the one "who is free from every attribute which a sense might perceive, or imagination may conceive, or to which imagination may instinctively turn or by which the conscience may be moved, or which thinking demands. I do not say: free from defects and imperfections, for the mere mention of that borders on insult; it is bad form for one to say: the king of the country is neither a weaver nor a cupper, since denying something's existence could falsely imply its possibility, and there is imperfection in that false implication."[591] Human beings can praise God by describing to Him attributes taken from their perfections i.e., knowledge, power, hearing, seeing etc., and denying of Him attributes taken from their imperfections, while God, argues Ghazālī, "transcendence attributes taken from their perfection as much as He does those reflecting their imperfections. Indeed God is free from every attribute of which the created can conceive; He transcends them and above anything similar to them or like them. So if no authorization or permission had been given to use them, it would not be permissible to use most of them."[592]

Al-Salām is another name that describes God's transcendence in absolute terms. It means the "*Flawless*". Ghazālī explains it as "the one whose essence is free from defect, whose attributes escape imperfection, and whose actions are untarnished by evil; and given that He is like that, there is nothing flawless in existence which is not attributed to Him, and originates from Him."[593] Al-Maydānī defines it, as "the one who is absolutely free from all kinds of defects in connection with His essence, His attributes and His actions. He is free from all that which are logically not befitting to the meanings of Godhead and Lordship, like resemblance or comparability with the contingent (*al-Hādith*).[594]

Al-Subbūḥ, to al-Ḥalīmī, means the one "who transcends the defects and attributes that befall the contingent because of its contingency."[595] Al-Bayhaqī reports from the Prophet himself that "*al-Tasbīḥ*" or "*Subḥān Allāh*" means, "God's absolute transcendence above and over all types of defects".[596] It means that "God's glory, greatness, and transcendence is such that He is far beyond all creaturely understanding."[597] *Al-`Alīy* (the Most High),[598] *al-Ghanī* (the Rich),[599] *al-Ṣamad* (the Self-Sufficient, the Eternal),[600] *al-Wāḥid* (the Unique),[601] *al-Awwal* (the First) and *al-Ākhir* (the Last),[602] are also among the names that denote God's transcendence in absolute terms.

If the names of essence tell us what God is not, the names of attributes tell us what God is. It may be said at the outset, that through these attributes, one cannot fathom God's self. Therefore, there is no contradiction between God's unknowability and knowability. When we describe some of the attributes of a person and say about him that he is this or that, by no way can we exhaust that person's reality. Likewise, to say that God is Merciful, or All-Knowledge, or all-Hearing etc., neither describes God's essence nor exhausts His reality. He is far above being exhausted by finite knowledge, imagination, or perception. The limitations of human knowledge and comprehension are obvious in sphere of the scientific knowledge. As for God, "Nothing is like unto Him" is the Qur'ānic dictum that clearly tells us that in no way or form we can understand His Being or essence. "God is the infinitely and absolutely Real, about which the relatively real can know but little. We can understand reality to the extent that we are real. And that raises the question of how real we are. That is what *Tawhid* is all about."[603]

Allāh is *al-Raḥmān*[604] (occurred in the Qur'ān 57 times and 170 times including *basmala*), and *al-Raḥīm* (occurred in the Qur'ān absolutely for God 114 times), the Infinitely Good and the Merciful. Both the names are derived from the root "*Raḥmah*" meaning mercy.[605] Mercy is one the most frequently mentioned and discussed attribute of God in the Qur'ān. "Thy Lord is Self-sufficient, full of Mercy" (6:133) "Your Lord is full of Mercy all-embracing" (6:147) "He hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy" (6:12) "Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy" (6:54 also see 7:156; 18:57; 40:7) He is in fact "the Most Merciful of those who show mercy". (12:64, 92: 21:83; 23:109, 118) In addition to these great many verses of the Qur'ān, the *Shahādah* itself is one of the great witnesses to this Divine attribute. Murata and Chittick observe, that *Shahādah* "tells us that all mercy is the gift of the Merciful. "There is no god but the Merciful" means that "There is no mercy but God's mercy," or "There is none merciful but the Merciful." God's mercy overshadows all the mercy in the universe. His mercy is true mercy, and other mercy is not worthy of the name. The Prophet expressed this idea in the following ḥadīth:

God created a hundred mercies on the day He created the heavens and the earth, each mercy of which would fill what is between the heaven and the earth. Of these He placed one mercy in the earth. Through it the mother inclines toward her child, and the birds and animals incline toward each other. When the day of resurrection comes, He will complete those mercies with this mercy."[606]

Mercy, observes Ghazālī, "requires an object of mercy, and no one is an object of mercy unless he is in need. Yet the one by whom the needs of the needy are fulfilled will not be called merciful if that is accomplished without intention, volition, or concern for the one in need. Nor is one called merciful who wants to fulfill their needs yet does not meet them even though he be able to fulfill them, because if the will were there he would have carried it out. But if he be unable to fulfill them, he is still called merciful- though in a deficient sense- in view of the empathy which affected him. Perfect mercy is pouring out benefaction to those in need, and directing it to them, for their care; and inclusive mercy is when it embraces deserving and undeserving alike. The mercy of God is both perfect and inclusive [*tāmma wa āmma*]: perfect inasmuch as it wants to fulfill the needs of those in need and does meet them; and inclusive inasmuch as it embraces both deserving and undeserving, encompassing this world and the next, and includes bare necessities and needs, and special gifts over and above them. So He is utterly and truly merciful."[607] Moreover, the mercy in our sense is accompanied with a painful empathy which effects the merciful and moves him to meet the needs of the one in need. Therefore, the one who is merciful out of such feelings of empathy and suffering "comes close to intending to alleviate his own suffering and sensitivity by his actions, thereby looking after himself and seeking his own goals, and that would take away from the perfection of the meaning of mercy. Rather, the perfection of mercy consists in looking after the one receiving mercy for the sake of the one receiving mercy, and not for the sake of being relieved from one's own suffering and sensitivity."[608] Such is the attribute of God. His mercy is absolute and perfect. Hence, there are no anthropomorphic implications of this attribute in God. The name *al-Raḥmān* is more specific than *al-Raḥīm*. *Al-Raḥmān* is not used for anybody other than God while *al-Raḥīm* can be used for others.[609] Always preceded by the definite article in the Qur'ān, observes Gardet, "this term is considered a proper name of God because, as J. Jomier has expressed it, nothing is said of al-Raḥmān that is not also said of Allāh. Allāh focuses thought on the unfathomable unicity, while al-Raḥmān focuses it on the depths of divine mercy and benevolence."[610]

Many Western scholars seem to have the tendency to portray Allāh as the fearful master, the tyrant ever ready to appropriate chastising punishments, the omnipotent that does what He feels like etc. Baillie, for instance observes that "Islam is too moralistic.... Its God is too sheerly transcendent, the Lawgiver, but not the Gracegiver, not the indwelling source and author of the obedience which He demands."[611] Franz Rosensweig argues the same.[612] Such a depiction of Allāh seems quite arbitrary when we reflect upon the verses of the Qur'ān regarding God's mercy and benevolence. The Qur'ānic Deity is full of Grace. "Allāh is Lord of abounding Grace", is the phrase which frequently encounters the reader of the Qur'ān. (2:105; 3:74, 174; 8:29; 57:29; 62:4 etc.) "Allāh is full of grace to mankind, but most of them are ungrateful." (2:243; 10:60; 40:61) "Allah is full of grace to all the worlds." (2:251) "Allāh is full of grace to the believers." (3:152) His grace is manifest, (27:16) and the highest (35:32; 42:22). He is Oft-Forgiving (*Ghafūr*).[613] This name has occurred in the Qur'ān 71 times (nominative case), 20 times (accusative case). He

loves to forgive all the sins as He is the Oft-forgiving, is the message communicated throughout the Qur'ān. (5:39: 6:54; 7:153; 15:49; 16:119; 39:53) "Your Lord is Most Forgiving, Full of Mercy." (18:58) That is why He has given Himself the name *al-Ghaffār*, which means, that not only He loves to forgive, He also conceals and covers the sins so as not to humiliate or embarrass the sinners.[614]

In addition, He is *al-Laṭīf* (the Benevolent),[615] *al-Wadūd* (the Loving-kind),[616] *al-Ḥalīm* (the Mild),[617] *al-Ra'ūf* (the All-Pitying),[618] *al-'Afū* (the Effacer of sins), *al-Barr* (the Doer of Good), and many other names to express His infinite Love, Mercy, Grace, and Kindness towards all of His creatures. Fazlur Rahman observes, that "The immediate impression from a cursory reading of the Qur'ān is that of the infinite majesty of God and His equally infinite mercy, although many a Western scholar (through a combination of ignorance and prejudice) has depicted the Qur'ānic God as a concentrate of pure power, even as brute power- indeed, as a capricious tyrant. The Qur'ān, of course, speaks of God in so many different contexts and so frequently that unless all the statements are interiorized into a total mental picture-without, as far as possible, the interference of any subjective and wishful thinking-it would be extremely difficult, if not outright impossible, to do justice to the Qur'ān concept of God."[619] It will suffice to quote L. Gardet again who observes, that "In the Qur'ān the names referring to God's mercy are much more frequent than those describing him as a fearful master. God is called al-Qahhār (the Fearsome) four times and once (59:23) al-Jabbār, which can be translated as the "terrible, the awesome," for this is how he would appear to the impious and the hypocrites. In these cases we are almost always dealing with an admonition against sinners that is followed by the wish "maybe he will return [unto God]" since God is both "Lord of majesty and of generosity" (55:78)." Gardet continues, that "For those who serve him and are faithful he is the Most Indulgent One who never ceases to pardon, the continual Giver, the Dispenser of all that is good, the Generous, the Consenter, the Answerer, the Friend and Protector, the Pitying, the Guide and Leader, and the Most Patient who is slow to punish. All these are Qur'ānic names that emphasize and clarify *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*, the Merciful, the Compassionate. When the Qur'ānic teaching is taken as a whole, as it should be, God's mercy becomes inseparable from the omnipotence of which it is a special expression. These two perfections are the two poles of divine action, at the same time contrasted and complementary."[620] B. F. Skinner and many other leading psychologists and students of behaviorism have shown, that "When it is possible to arrange a situation so that punishment immediately follows the undesirable behavior, but does not occur at other times, it may be effective in suppressing undesirable behavior without producing harmful side affects."[621] Therefore, it can be argued, that the occurrence in the Qur'ān of promises of severe punishments as an admonition to the sinners, may prove a positive stimuli to suppress the undesired behavior in them without harmful side effects of losing sight of God's surpassing mercy. These two polar aspects (Omnipotence and Mercy) of the Divinity mutually strengthen each other and encourage and fortify the desired good behavior. On the other hand, their correlativity is such a positive factor that can be helpful in checking wrongful human attitudes or inclinations.

The later theological dispositions and treatises, however, may not have the same emphasis and balance between these two correlative Divine aspects, but the Qur'ānic approach is quite balanced in this regard. Furthermore, the Qur'ān indeed is very emphatic about the grace and mercy of God Almighty. Bishop Cragg rightly observes, that "Despite its uncompromising severity, however, it

is throughout an understanding about mercy and compassion. Somehow these elements were less exposed to the issues which needed such vigilance from the theologians in respect of sovereignty and will. As befits its emphasis the classic theology of Islam is less concerned about the "comfort" of man than it is about the majesty and immunity of God, since these must be seen as, in every event, a prerequisite of the mercy. In its own urgent way, the Qur'ān is warmer, kindlier, more compassionate than the theologians. While the Book of Islam underwrites and prompts the latter in many of their concerns and something of their temper, its vitality and fervor, its mission and movement, bring the reader into a different world from the aridity and calculation of the dogmatists."[622]

God's absolute Omniscience is expressed by the names *`Ālim al-Ghayb wa al-Shahādah* (the Knower of the hidden and the manifest), and by *al-`Alīm* (the Omniscience). The name `Ālim al-Ghayb occurs in the Qur'ān 13 times (10 times with the combination of both i.e., `Ālim al-Ghayb wa al-Shahādah). (6:73; 9:94, 105; 13:9; 23:92; 23:6; 59:22 etc.) "Verily Allāh knows (all) the hidden things of the heavens and the earth: verily He has full knowledge of all that is in (men's) hearts." (35:38; 3:119; 5:7; 8:43;) "He knows what they conceal, and what they reveal: for He knoweth well the (inmost secrets) of the hearts." (11:5; 63:4; 67:13) "Does not Allāh know best all that is in the hearts of all the creation." (29:10) "He knows the treachery of the eyes, and all that the hearts (of men) conceal." (40:19) "And verily your Lord knoweth all that their hearts do hide, as well as all that they reveal." (27:74; 28:69;) "He knows what is hidden and what is open: too high is He for the partners they attribute to Him." (23:92) That is why He is called the Omniscient *al-`Alīm*. This name occurs 140 times (nominative case), 22 times (accusative case), and 4 times as `Allām. Ghazālī observes, that "Its perfection lies in comprehending everything by knowledge-manifest and hidden, small and large, first and last, inception and outcome-and with respect to the multitude of objects known, this will be infinite. Then the knowledge itself will be the most perfect possible, with respect to its clarity and its disclosure, in such a way that no more evident disclosure or vision can be conceived. Finally it is not derived from things known; rather things known are derived from it."[623]

He is also *al-Khabīr*- the All-Aware (33 times in the nominative and 12 times in the accusative case). *Al-Khabīr* is the one "from whom no secret information is hidden, for nothing goes on in the realms of heaven or earth, no atoms moves, and no soul is stirred or calmed, without His being aware of it. It has the same meaning as `the Omniscient', yet when knowledge [*`ilm*] is related to hidden secrets it called 'awareness' [*khibra*], and the one who possesses it is 'He who is aware [of everything]."[624] The Qur'ān informs, that "With Him are the key of the Unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He. He knoweth whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf doth fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a Record clear (to those who can read)." (6:59) "Him who knows the unseen, from Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth: nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in the Record Perspicuous." (34:3; 10:61)

He is also *al-Samī`* (the All-Hearing). This name has occurred in the Qur'ān, a total of 47 times (43 nominative and 4 accusative cases). *Al-Samī`* is the one "from whose perception nothing audible is removed, even if it be hidden. So He hears secrets as well as whispers, and what is

subtler and more concealed than these; `indeed He perceives the crawling of a black ant on a massive rock in the dark of night'. He hears the praise of those praising Him and rewards them, as well as entreaties of those praying and responds to them." Ghazālī further observes, that, "He hears without any auditory organs or ears, as He acts without limbs and speaks without a tongue; and His hearing is free from accidents which could befall it. When you elevate the All-Hearing above changes which happen to Him when audible sounds occur, and exalt Him above hearing by ears or by instruments and devices, you will realize that hearing, so far as He is concerned, is tantamount to an attribute by which the perfection of the qualities of things heard is dissolved. Whoever does not take care in considering this matter will inevitably fall into pure anthropomorphism. So be wary about it, and be precise when you consider it."[625] The Qur'ān requires the Prophet to witness this attribute of God with the following words: "Say: "My Lord knoweth (every) word (spoken) in the heavens and on earth: He is the One that hearth and knoweth (all things)." (21:4)

He is also *al-Baṣīr*, the All-Seeing (51 times, 36 nominative and 15 accusative cases). Ghazālī defines it as the one "who witnesses and sees in such a way that nothing is remote from Him, even what is under the earth. His seeing is also above having dependence on pupils and eyelids, and exalted beyond reference to the impression of images and colors on His essence, as they are impressed on men's pupils, for that is a form of change and influence which requires coming -into-existence. Since He is above that, seeing in His case is equivalent to an attribute through which the perfection of qualities of visible things is disclosed. And that is clearer and more evident than what may be grasped by perception on the part of a sight limited to the appearances of visible things."[626] "Verily Allāh knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth: and Allāh sees well all that ye do."- (49:18) This message has been conveyed by great many Qur'ānic verses (83 times as "He knows what you do `*ta`malūn*', and 56 times as "they do `*ya`malūn*'." "He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresover ye may be. And Allāh sees well all that ye do." (57:4) "Seest thou not that Allāh doth know (all) that in the heavens and on earth? There is not a secret consultation between three, but He is the fourth of them,-nor between five but He is the sixth,-nor between fewer nor more, but He is with them, wheresoever they be: in the end will He tell them what they did on the Day of Judgment. For Allāh has full knowledge of all things." (58:7) "It was We Who created man, and We know what suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein." (50:16)

In short, God is Omniscience as much as He is Omnipresent. C. E. Farah observes, that to Islam God is "omnipresent, too exalted to be contained in any one place and too holy to be determined by time; for He existed before He created time and place, and He is now as he always existed. There is nothing like Him in His essence nor is there of His essence in any other besides Him. His holiness makes Him impervious to change and He is beyond contingencies. But He abides through all generations with His glorious attributes, free from all imperfection."[627] Therefore, the above discussed samples of the Divine names and the related Qur'ānic passages speak for themselves proving that the Qur'ānic Deity is absolutely Omniscient and Omnipresent. He is absolutely free from the limitations which we happened to see in some of the biblical passages in terms of God's Omniscience and Omnipresence. Moreover, the Qur'ānic representation of God's attributes of omniscience and omnipresence are abstract in the sense that they are not connected with any of

the physical organs or corporeal qualities. His knowledge and power is felt but not imagined or represented in any way or form in human or material categories.

There are a number of names that denote God's absolute Omnipotence. *Al-Qādir* (the All-Powerful), or *al-Qadīr*, *al-Qawī* (the Strong), *al-Matīn* (the Firm), *al-Muqtadir* (the All-Determiner), *al-Wājid* (the Resourceful), *al-`Azīz* (the Eminent), *al-Muqīt* (the Nourisher), *Mālik al-Mulk* (the King of Absolute Sovereignty), and *al-Malik* (the King), are a just a few of them. The name *al-Qādir* has occurred in the Qur'ān for 7 times, *Qadīr* for 45 times (39 nominative and 6 accusative cases), and *al-Muqtadir* 3 times. "To Allāh belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allāh hath power over all things" (3:189), is the message which is given throughout the Qur'ān. The Divine omnipotence is extolled by frequent reference to the acts of creation, annihilation, sustenance, preservation, and unparalleled Lordship, "the Lord and Creator of all things." (6:164; 13:16) He is the absolute initiator (*al-Badī*) and creates whomsoever He wishes and causes death to whomsoever He wishes. When He decides for something He commands, and that is there. "When he decrees a thing, he but says to it `Be' and it is." (2:117; 16:40; 19:35; 36:82: 40:68) Ghazālī observes, that the names All-Powerful and the All-Determiner "both mean `one who posses power', but `the All-Determiner' is more emphatic. Power is equivalent to the intention by which a thing comes into existence according to determined plan of will and knowledge, and in conformity with both of them. The All-Powerful is one who does what he wills, or does not act if he so wills, and is not so conditioned as to will necessarily. So God is all-powerful in that He could bring about the resurrection now, and He would bring it about were He to will it. So if He does not bring it about, that is because He has not willed it, and He does not will it to happen now inasmuch as His knowledge had previously fixed its appointed time and moment according to plan, which hardly detracts from His power. The absolutely powerful is He who creates each existent individually without needing assistance from anyone else, and this is God most high."[628]

The God cannot be dominated by anybody or anything from His creation as He is *al-Qawī* and *al-Matīn*, the Strong, the Firm. In God, the "Strength indicates perfect power, while firmness indicates intensification of strength. So God-may He be praised and exalted, insofar as He possesses the utmost power and is perfect in it, is the strong one; and in so far as He has intense strength, He is firm."[629] He transcends creaturely weaknesses. "We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in Six Days, nor did any sense of weariness touch Us." (50:38) All this emphasis upon God's omnipotence, in Fazlur Rahman's view, is "to show up the dangerous silliness of humans who come either to equate and identify finite beings with the Infinite one, or to posit intermediary gods or powers between Him and His creation, when He is directly and even intimately related with His creation. But even more important for us is the fact that God exercises His greatness, power, and all-comprehensive presence primarily through the entire range of the manifestations of mercy-through being and creation, sustenance of that creation, guiding that creation to its destiny, and, finally, through a "return" to the creatures who, after willful alienation, sincerely wish to be reconciled to the source of their being, life, and guidance."[630]

Among this category of names, *al-Malik* (the King) perhaps seems to give the most concrete sound. But, as observe Murata and Chittick, "this name, like other divine names, does not imply that God is pictured in concrete terms. Rather, the name means that God is a reality that possesses

the attributes of kingship to such a degree that nothing else really deserves the name. If God is King, that all power and ruling authority belong to him, while earthly kings , presidents, dictators represent at best pale reflections of God's kingly power. *Tawhīd* means that the qualities denoted by God's names belong truly to God and only secondarily or metaphorically to the creatures. Any divine name can be placed in the sentence of *tawhīd*, "There is no god but God." Thus the first Shahadah can be utilized as a quick formula for stating the various implications of *tawhīd*."[631]

It is evident that names of God's attributes maintain God's transcendence as vehemently as do the names of God's essence. The Qur'ān has denied God of all the limitations and imperfections of the mortals while emphasizing His absolute attributes as the Ultimate Reality. The above discussed category of names and the connected attributes perform another important function i.e., the immanence of God. They produce a kind of modality for human imagination, but soon the imagination is reminded of its limitations when clearly told that these names and attributes are not relative like the attributes of human beings or any of the creatures. They are the attributes of the transcendent God who is absolute, hence His attributes know no bounds and transcend utilitarian sphere of time and space as much as God Himself transcends His creatures. Furthermore, the relation of these predicates to their subject cannot be analyzed in the sense of the empirical world as all the human categories of expressions are finite while God and His attributes are infinite. Therefore, the pervasiveness of these names and attributes in the Qur'ān, and their commonly known and understood lexicographic meanings make the Qur'ānic Deity very vivid, alive, and immanent, but at the same time infinitely mysterious, awesome, and transcendent. Such a presentation of the Deity gives enough opportunity for a kind of modality and hence communication, denying at the same time any similarity, comparison, and concrete image. Meaningful,- respectful, and a sort of demanding relationship is encouraged to be established between God and man, but the limitations are always prescribed so as to maintain the transcendence in all times and situations. The Qur'ān very successfully establishes such an immanence of God by bringing the beautiful names or related attributes of God as epilogues of a great majority of the Qur'ānic passages. The usage of these names and the attributes is not arbitrary, it is wonderfully meaningful and closely contextual or connected with the subject matter of the passage in discussion. The names of mercy, love, and forgiveness, for instance, are brought as epilogues of the verses encouraging repentance or emphasizing God's love, mercy and grace.[632] "Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allāh: for Allāh forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (39:53) "Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare the Praises and Glory of Allāh: to Him belongs Dominion, and to Him belongs Praise: and He has power over all things...He knows what is in the heavens and on earth; and knows what ye conceal and what ye reveal: yea, Allāh knows well (*'Alīm*) the (secrets) of (all) hearts." (64: 1, 4) "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a retribution for their deed and exemplary punishment from Allāh, and Allāh is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom. But if the thief repent after his crime, and amend his conduct, Allāh turneth to him in forgiveness; for Allāh is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. Knowest thou not that to Allāh (alone) belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth? He punisheth whom He pleaseth, and He forgiveth whom He pleaseth: And Allāh hath power over all things (*Qadīr*). (5:38-40)[633]

The third category of the Beautiful Names, denotes God's actions towards His creatures. The names of attributes do not need anybody or thing other than God Himself as they describe

perfections of God. On the other hand, the names of acts are distinguished by the fact that they make sense only in terms of God's creatures, and that they have opposites that are also divine names. Examples are *al-Muḥyī* (the Life-Giver) and *al-Mumīt* (the Slayer), *al-Mu`izz* (the Honourer) and *al-Mudhil* (the One who humbles) etc. So God is *al-Razzāq* (the Provider), *al-Bāri'* (the Producer), *al-Muṣawwir* (the Fashioner), *al-Khāfiḍ* (the Abaser) and *al-Rāfi`* (the Exalter), *al-Mujīb* (the Answerer of prayers), *al-Wakīl* (the Guardian), *al-Māni`* (the Protector) and *al-Ḍārr* (the Punisher) etc.[634]

It is pertinent to mention here that all of God's names are derived from the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth; they are *tawqīfiyyah.* L. Gardet observes that "the divine Names can only be given to God by *tawkīf* , i.e. by preconcerted "determination"; by which we understand: as God Himself has "determined" it in the Kur'ān and secondarily in the *Sunna*. The employment of the latter in this connexion must be limited to "authentic" (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and "good" (*ḥasan*) *ḥadīth*."[635] .Nothing could be added to them or subtracted from them. Ibn al-Qayyam,[636] Ibn Ḥajar,[637] al-Ghazālī,[638] al-Qushairī,[639] al-Safarīnī,[640] al-Baghdādī,[641] all agree that nothing could be added to or subtracted from the Divine names established by the revelation.[642] The reason to limit the Divine names only to the authentic revelation is, to confess utter dependence upon God regarding the proper knowledge about His being. Such a dependence is recognition of the impossibility of knowing God except through what He has decided to reveal to us. Another established criterion among all the mainstream Muslim scholars is, that God possesses all these perfections from eternity.[643] God cannot be characterized by names insinuating that He acquired these perfections, or by blemish or bad names like poor, cruel, cheat etc..[644] He cannot be given an evil quality or attribute.[645] The scholars also agree that diminutives of God's names are prohibited,[646] as are the words alluding to dual meanings like conveying praise as well as condemnation, are forbidden.[647] The other established criterion is that His absolute transcendence and exalted majesty must be maintained at all costs. All ideas, concepts, imaginations, and even perceptions leading to resemblance, similarity, comparability, corporeality, and anthropomorphism must be denied of Him.[648]

It must be noticed that the presence of some of these names and qualities in the human beings does not make these attributes and qualities of God anthropomorphic or corporeal. God is the First and the Everlasting. These attributes are non-corporeal and are first present in Him and then in the Human beings. Moreover, in God they are perfections and absolute, while in the humans they are imperfect and relative; therefore, to describe God with these non-physical attributes and absolute qualities does not make Him similar or comparable to man. These expressions are just ways to try to know Him as much as our human limitations allow us. Ghazālī rightly observes: "So if God had an attribute or a specifying property, and there were nothing in us corresponding to it or sharing its name-even so much as the sweetness of sugar shares in the pleasure of intercourse-it would be in conceivable that we would ever understand [the attribute or property] at all. For each person only understands himself, and then compares his own attributes with those of God the most high. Yet His attributes are too exalted to be likened to ours! So this will be an inadequate knowledge in which imagining and resemblance are preponderant. So it needs to be complemented by the knowledge which denies any likeness, and which rejects any grounds for commensurability, even though the name be shared."[649] Therefore, God is unknowable, as "knowing something is to know its reality and its quiddity, not the names derived from it."[650]

Consequently, all efforts should be directed to reflect upon the creatures of God instead of reflections upon His essence as there is not any way that one can comprehend it. "He knows what is before or after or behind them: but they shall comprehend Him not." (20:110) The Prophet pinpointed this fact in the following words: "Reflect upon God's creation and not upon God Himself."[651]

In short, the Transcendent God has not the least resemblance to the limited, deficient, and imperfect creatures of Him. He has no resemblance with other gods with their semi-human nature which the minds of men, due to lack of knowledge and understanding, have invented to supply the deficiencies in their comprehension, but who at the same time fall so short of being God-like. Contrary to that, He enjoys all attributes of perfection appropriate to His Divine Majesty and Exalted Power. Contemplation upon these attributes and the Beautiful Names is the only recourse to grasp glimpses of His Divine majesty.[652] L. Gardet concludes his article "Allāh", with the following observations: "The Kur'ānic preaching about God is entirely centered on its affirmations of Oneness and unity, of transcendence and subsistence, of absolute perfections. The forbidding inaccessibility of the divine nature is resolutely maintained; God, omniscient and "near", can be known only by His Word, by the Names, the attributes and acts of His paramount Sovereignty, which He Himself reveals. It is indeed in His Sovereignty over every creature that Allāh is manifested. The Attributes of omniscience and omnipotence relate to God's outward directed knowledge and power. The declaration of Oneness pertains to the oneness of the divine nature, the godhead as such. God in Himself remains the unexpressed mystery, *ghayb*."[653] Therefore, as I. R. Netton observes, "The God portrayed in the Qur'ān has both a transcendent and an immanent aspect. On the one hand `like Him there is naught'; on the other, God announces in His revelation: `We indeed created man; and We know what his soul whispers within him, and we are nearer to him than the jugular vein."[654]

In the light of what has been discussed so far, we can conclude that the Qur'ānic concept of the Deity is straightforward and self-explaining. It consists of absolute denial of existence, authority, rule, sovereignty, abilities to harm or benefit, or represent God in any way or form, and worship of other gods; while at the same time restoration of all these attributes and qualities in the God. His attributes and qualities are absolute and are never connected with any physical object, part or organ of a body. For instance, He can speak through inanimate things such as a bush or a tree, as He did in the case of Moses. (28:30) In fact, "It is not fitting for a man that Allāh should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by sending of a Messenger to reveal, with Allāh's permission, what Allāh wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise." (42:51) He does not have a body. Nobody can see Him. Moses' request for a glimpse of God was answered by the following words: "Allāh said: "By no means canst thou see Me; But look upon the Mount; if it abides in its place, then shalt thou see Me." When his Lord manifested (revealed) Himself to the Mount, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to Thee! To Thee I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe." (7:143) The reason is, that "No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision; He is Subtle well aware." (6:103) In short, the Qur'ān has explained monotheism in the simple, logical, and intelligible terms and categories, elaborated such a concept with additional countless ways, methods, and examples. The Divine transcendence is an intrinsic part of the Qur'ānic concept of the Deity. Such a transcendent God is immanent by dint of His countless absolute attributes expressed through His Beautiful

Names and many other signs and manifestations through His creations. Moreover, the Qur'ān makes special efforts to safeguard such a concept of the Divine Unity, Uniqueness, and Transcendence against possible violations, confusions, and ambiguities. This original alertness, observes Bishop Cragg, "against all false theologies accompanies the whole elaboration of Muslim religion. It is, as it were, a supreme "Protestantism" in its very genesis, a cry of heart and a mission of will against all that violated the Divine unity or distracted men from the single direction of their love, their loyalty, and their obedience. Hence the ringing shout of praise that echoes through all Islamic ritual and dogma: *Allāhu akbar*, "Greater is God," which, grammatically, is a comparative form made all the more striking by its refusal, indeed its inability, to enter any stated comparison. "God is greater" than all that could conceivably be set in any clause after "than." The idea of framing such a clause is itself unthinkable. Yet the superlative ("God is the greatest") is not preferred, for this could imply approximate equality and would, as such, be open to ambiguity, as the psalm is which declares: "He is a great king above all gods." Are we to understand that the gods exist, if only as underlings? Or do we mean that the Lord reigns in utter majesty alone? Islam has no truck with such double possibility of intention. It was not the existence of *Allāh* that Muḥammad proclaimed. The tribes knew Him by His name. It was His *sole* existence, negating all pluralism. God is exalted above all that might-though always impossibly- compare with Him."[655]

It is this notion of the absolute transcendence and alertness against corporeality, anthropomorphism, or any other kind of comparability, that has been reflected into Islamic art, language, and other aspects of the Islamic civilization and culture. Al-Fārūqī writes regarding the transcendence in Islamic art: "The association of things and sensory images with God was meticulously avoided by Muslims at all times and places. Never has any Muslim mosque contained any object associated with divinity. The mosque has always been an empty building. It walls and ceiling would be decorated either with verses from the Qur'ān or with abstract arabesques. The latter were designs made of stylized stalk, leaf and flower, deliberately denaturalized and symmetrically repeated to dispel any suggestion of the creaturely natural as vehicle of expression for the divine." He further observes, that "The arabesque could also consist of geometrical figures which their very geometrical nature bespoke the denial of nature as expressive of the divine. The arabesque was expansive by nature, to suggest an infinite field of vision to which the interlacing of its figures propelled the imagination *ad infinitum.... The* imagination failed to produce the infinite continuation every time it was asked by an arabesque to do so; and, in the process, gave the subject an aesthetic intuition of infinity, a facet of transcendence. All the arts in Islam developed in fulfillment of divine transcendence acting as supreme principle of esthetics..."[656]

The same strict precautions to maintain the Divine transcendence were taken in regards with the language. Al-Fārūqī observes, that "Transcendence in language was equally well maintained by Muslims around the globe, speaking all sorts of languages and dialects and belonging to all sort of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This was the objective of the Qur'ānic dicta, "We (God) have revealed it an Arabic Qur'ān" (12:2; 20:113)... Any God-talk by Muslims became exclusively Qur'ān-talk, one adhering scrupulously to the Arabic categories of the Qur'ān, and to its Arabic terms, its Arabic literary forms and expressions.... Thus, empirical language-figures and relations from the world are used; but with the unmistakable denial that they apply to God *simpliciter*."[657] Muslims always have avoided usage of phrases such as father, son, regarding God-man relationship. The phrases like "God the Father", "Mother of God", "Son of God", "Crucified God"

or "Sons of God" etc., are not found in Islamic literature. Such phrases are utterly banished from the Islamic religious vocabulary[658] in order to absolutely eliminate such consciousness that can lead to the confusions and difficulties we have seen in the previous chapters with regard to Judaism and Christianity. "Islam held as a matter of principle that no man or being is one iota nearer to God than any other. That all creation is creaturely, that it stands on this side of the line dividing the transcendent from the natural, is necessary presupposition of God's exiological ultimacy."[659] On the other hand, terms such as 'Lord', 'Master', the 'Most Merciful', the 'Compassionate', are frequently used to denote the God, while phrases such as "servant" (*`abd*), "mankind" (*al-nās*), "human being" (*al-insān*), "creation" (*khalq*) etc., are used to denote man and the creation.

Al-Tawḥīd, with all this multiplex emphasis, is not meant merely to exalt God and chant His glories, or to claim special privity with God or special privileges or a sense of superiority. None of these elements or claims are implied in the Qur'ānic understanding of monotheism. Contrary to that, is meant to create the proper response in man, the response that is essential to encourage man to work towards transforming the human society of time and space in accordance with divine moral rules. The essence of *al-Tawḥīd* can be summarized in the following five terms: (1) Duality of reality i.e., God and non-God, and God as normativeness, meaning. the Being who commands (moral will of God) and whose commandments are ought-to-be. (2) Ideationality: meaning that the relationship between the two orders of reality is ideational in nature. Man can understand this relationship easily through the faculty of understanding. (3) Teleology: that the nature of the cosmos is teleological; that is, purposive, serving a purpose of its Creator, and doing so out of design. Man also has a purpose and that is to be God's vicegerent on earth. (4) Capacity of man and malleability of Nature: since the nature of the cosmos is teleological, hence the actualization of the Divine purpose must be possible in space and time. (5) Responsibility and Judgment i.e., that man stands responsible to realize the moral will of God and change himself, society, and environment so as to conform to the divine pattern. To do so is success and to disobey Him is to incur punishment and failure. The forgoing five principles, argues al-Fārūqī, "are self-evident truths. They constitute the core of *al-tawḥīd* and the quintessence of Islam."[660]

Therefore, Rahman is justified in his observation, that "The Qur'ān is a document that is squarely aimed at man; indeed, it calls itself "guidance for mankind" (*hudan li'l-nas* [2:185] and numerous equivalents elsewhere). Yet, the term *Allāh,* the proper name for God, occurs well over 2,500 times in the Qur'ān (not to count the term *al-Rabb,* The Lord, and *al-Rahman*, The Merciful, which, although they signify qualities, have nevertheless come to acquire substance). Still, the Qur'ān is no treatise about God and His nature: His existence, for the Qur'ān, is strictly functional-He is creator and Sustainer of the universe and of man, and particularly the giver of guidance for man and He who judges man, individually and collectively, and metes out to him merciful justice."[661] Izutsu presents the same point in the following words: "For among all these created things "man" is the one to which is attached so great an importance in the Koran that it attracts at least the same amount of our attention as God. Man, his nature, conduct, psychology, duties and destiny are, in fact, as much the central preoccupation of the Koranic thought as the problem of God Himself. What God is, says and does, becomes a problem chiefly, if not exclusively, in connection with the problem of how man reacts to it. The Koranic thought as a whole is concerned with the problem of salvation of human beings. If it were not for this problem, the

Book would have not been "sent down", as the Koran itself explicitly and repeatedly emphasizes. And in this particular sense, the concept of man is important to such a degree that it forms the second major pole standing face to face with principal pole, that is concept of Allāh."[662]

Consequently, the *Tawhid* is directly connected with the moral sphere of human life. Its essence cannot be achieved without actualizing its demands of unity and universality of truth,[663] unity, equality, and equity among the human race,[664] and all that has to take place here and now i.e., practically in the human society. Al-Fārūqī expresses the point succinctly: "Al-tawḥīd commits man to an ethic of action; that is, to an ethic where worth and unworth are measured by the degree of success the moral subject achieves in disturbing the flow of space-time, in his body as well as around him. It does not deny the ethic of intent where the same measurement is made by the level of personal values effecting the moral subject's state of consciousness alone, for the two are not incompatible...." He continues, that "Having acquiesced to God alone as his Master, having committed himself, his life and all energies to His service, and having recognized His Master's will as that which ought to be actualized in space-time, he must enter the rough and tumble of the market place and history and therein bring about the desired transformation. He cannot lead a monastic, isolationist existence unless it be as an exercise in self-discipline and self-mastery."[665]

This moral function of man, justifies his creation in God's moral image, in the best of form, as the vicegerent of God on earth.[666] Therefore, Islamic understanding of monotheism is moralistic through and through again.[667] That explains why the Qur'ān almost always combines both the faith (*imān*) and good deeds (*ʿamal ṣāliḥ*). (2:25, 82, 277; 3:57; 4:57, 122, 173; 5:9, 93)[668] The Qur'ān also vehemently stigmatizes those who disobey God's moral will and follow their own desires, inclinations, and moods as gods. The word Qur'ān employs to denote such a tendency is *hawa* (17 times "to follow the caprices"), which can be translated as "caprice." "Have you seen him who has taken his own caprice to be his god?" (25:43; 45:23)[669] This moralistic understanding of *al-Tawḥīd* along with its notion of the Day of Judgment, is reflected through the very early Mekkan chapters of the Qur'ān. Such a concept of the Divinity is revolutionary and plays a vital role in the Muslim life.[670] It would suffice to quote an early Meccan chapter (107 al-Māʿūn or Neighborly Needs), as an example of the Qur'ānic correlation of the belief in God and Day of Judgment and efforts to transform one's surroundings: "Seest thou one who denies the Day of Judgment. Then such is the one who repulses the orphan and encourages not the feeding of the indigent. So woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers, those who (want but) to be seen, but refuse (to supply even) neighborly needs."[671] Therefore, it can be said loud and clear, that the Qur'ān connects the human salvation with morality, and not solely with a belief in or confession of a specific set of doctrines or dogmas.

Furthermore, the Qur'ānic concept of monotheism is not evolutionary, it is universal. The Qur'ān gives this moralistic understanding of monotheism a universal dimension by claiming that this was the same message revealed to all the Prophets and all the nations. "For We assuredly sent amongst every People a Messenger, (with the Command), "Serve Allāh, and eschew Evil." (16:36; 35:24) So Noah was sent to his people with the message: "Worship Allāh! ye have no other god but Him." (7:59) All the subsequent prophets and messengers of God received and communicated the same message. (7:65-93) This theme has occurred in the Qur'ān very frequently.[672]

Anthropomorphism and the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and Some Muslim Sects:

In spite of strong emphasis upon the transcendence, uniqueness, and inaccessibility of God, sometimes even to the point of jealousy, the Qur'ān contains a few verses whose somewhat picturesque style, if taken absolutely literally, may seem to ascribe some human attributes or acts to God. This is the group of verses often called *"mutashābih"* meaning "ambiguous" verses in contrast to the *"muḥkam"* verses whose meanings are firm and clearly established. The Qur'ān says: "He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental clear (in meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are not entirely clear. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is not entirely clear. Seeking discord, and searching for its interpretation, but no one knows its true meanings except Allāh. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it, the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding." (3:7)[673] These ambiguous verses had been the object of many exegetic and theological disputes in the later Muslim theological thought. Although the mainstream Muslims have always denied and refuted anthropomorphic conception of God, there have been some individuals and sects who have fallen a prey to an anthropomorphic conception of the Deity; therefore justifying for us to have a detailed account of the responses *vis a vis* the above mentioned Qur'ānic verses and phrases.

An example of this category of the Qur'ānic passages and phrases is the Qur'ānic usage of the word *"wajh,"* literally meaning "face," for God in a total of 11 verses (5 times "the face of Allāh" 2:115, 272; 30:38, 39; 76:9; 1 time "the face of their Lord" 13:22, 1 time "the face of your Lord" 55:27, 1 time "the face of his Lord" 92:20 and 3 times "His face" 6:52; 18:28; 28:88). It will be interesting to note the context in which the phrase has occurred in several of the Qur'ānic verses. For instance in 2:272 it says: "Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allāh (*li wajhillāh*). In 13:22 it says: "Those who patiently persevere *"li wajhi rabbihim"* "for the face of their Lord". From the above quoted and also from the other Qur'ānic verses (see also for instance 30:30, 43) it seems clear that the usage of this phrase regarding God is more symbolic than literal; therefore leading many Muslim exegetes and scholars to interpret it as the *"zātillāh* i.e., the being of Allāh, or "for His sake".[674] Such an interpretation is substantiated by the other Qur'ānic verses where it says: "And call not, besides Allāh, on another god. There is no god but He. *Everything (that exists) will perish except His face.* To Him belongs the Command, and to Him will ye (all) be brought back." (28:88) In 55:26-7 it says: "All that is on earth will perish: but *will abide (for ever) the face of thy Lord*,- full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour." The Qur'ānic exegetes agree that here the word *'wajh'* refers to God Almighty Himself and not to an organ or body at all.[675] Ibn Ḥazm observes that *"wajhillāh* means Allāh Himself."[676] Ibn Qayyam reports a kind of consensus that this verse to the exegetes means, that "your Lord will abide for ever."[677] Al-Bayhaqī observes that the verse (28:88) stipulates, that the *"wajh* means the being and not, in any way or form, denote an attribute or an organ..."[678] Al-Bayhaqī discusses in details the reports *"aḥādīth"* talking about the "pride and majesty as the cloak or mantel of His face",[679] or the supplication that O Allāh "Grant me the bliss of a glance at your face",[680] or that "the veil or cover of His face is light"[681] etc. to prove that the phrase *'wajh'* refers to God's being rather than an organ or part of body in Him.

It is clear from the above quoted example that the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* both contain poetical expressions which, if taken absolutely literally, could lead to anthropomorphism. In the words of I. R. Netton, "Islam too has had a problem of divine 'faces': not in the sense of a single deity divided up among, or represented by, many gods but simply in the fact that Muslims over the ages have regarded their one God in several widely differing ways."[682]

The above mentioned Qur'ānic expressions did not cause much problem to the first generation of Muslims. From a sociophenomenological viewpoint, we see that usually the original sacred text of the Scriptures is given a normative value for the religious thought and early believers very often hesitate to rationalize or free themselves from the explicit terms and phrases (terminology) of the message accepted as normative. This was exactly the case with the first generation of Muslims. The ethico-practical nature of Islamic religion,[683] the simplicity and clarity of its basic creed, and engagement of its followers in political solidification as well as territorial expansions from the very beginning[684] did not leave much room for speculative and theoretical thinking among the generation of "*Ṣaḥābah*, the Disciples or Companions of the Prophet". Although not discouraging logical thinking or use of one's mind, the Prophet himself and his immediate successors are reported to have discouraged speculative inquiry into theoretical issues without any practical significance to the community.[685] `Umar, the second Caliph, has been reported to have appropriated severe physical punishment upon individuals like *`Ubaidullah b. Ṣabīgh,* who vainly engaged themselves in inquiry about the *mutashābih* or ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān.[686] That is perhaps the reason that until the last years of `Uthman's reign, nobody talked about speculative or theological issues such as attributes of God as `Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, al-Maqrayzī, Ibn Khuldūn and many others have observed.[687] Due to the mass conversion of non-Muslims (some of them Christians and Jews),[688] political unrest in the later part of `Uthman's government, and then civil wars in `Ali's period,[689] several theologically oriented and politically motivated efforts of theoretical speculations found their way into the Islamic community.[690]

Anthropomorphism and corporealism were the first importees. Most of the Islamic historical and theological sources connect such a development to the name of `Abdullah b. Sabā, a Jew from Yamen, who, according to these sources, converted to Islam with a secret agenda and ill disposition.[691] Ibn Sabā was the first to exalt `Alī, the son-in-law of the Prophet and the fourth Caliph, to divinity by addressing `Alī with the phrases such as, "Thou art Thou', that is , `Thou art God'."[692] `Alī is reported to have deported Ibn Sabā to al-Madāin[693] and burnt many of his followers who attributed divinity to `Alī.[694] Ibn Sabā, on the other hand, continued exalting `Alī even after `Alī's death. He attributed to `Alī several of the divine attributes and the second coming.[695] Most of the extreme Shī`ah sects[696] like al-Bayāniyyah, al-Mughīyriyyah, al-Manṣūriyyah, al-Yūnusiyyah, al-Hishāmiyyah, and many others[697] assimilated Ibn Sabā's corporeal thoughts and went very far in corporealism. Most of the Muslim historians count such extreme sects among the corporealists or *Mujassimah*.[698] A great majority of the Muslim scholars argue from here that the issue of anthropomorphism was introduced into Islam by Jewish influence as Jewish circles were accustomed to such anthropomorphic tendencies regarding God. Al-Shahrastānī, al-Rāzī, al-Isfrā'īnī, al-Ghurābī, al-Nashshār, Suhayr Mukhtār, Fatḥī M. al-Zaghī and many others emphatically argue that the anthropomorphic and corporeal thought crept into Islamic circles through Jewish Ibn Sabā to the extreme Shī`ah sects.[699] Goldziher and Watt

attribute such a tendency to the Gnostic influences.[700] Some other Muslim scholars like `Arfān `Abd al-Ḥamīd, attribute such a development to internal factors such as literalism of the Muslim literalists like *al-Hashawiyyah* and some traditionalists, and to their literal interpretations of the Qur'ānic verses.[701]

The fact is that literalists like Muqātil b. Sulaymān, to whom most of the anthropomorphic interpretations of the Qur'ānic expressions are attributed,[702] died in 150 A.H.,[703] while Ibn Sabā propagated his corporealism in the late fifties and early sixties as `Alī was killed in 61 A.H. Matti Moosa observes, that Ibn Saba was the "first [who] ascribed divinity to him. Ibn Saba preached that Ali would one day return in the clouds, with thunder as his voice, and lightning as the radiance of his whip... Ibn Saba and his followers never ceased to deify Ali, however. When Ali was assassinated in 661, they did not acknowledge his death but preached that he would return one day in the clouds."[704] Wellhausen argues, that "one is led to a Jewish origin of the sect. Certainly many things are called Jews and Jewish by the Muslims without any reason. But in fact the dogma of Shī'ism, the founder of which is considered to be Ibn Sabā', seems to stem more from the Jews than from the Persians."[705] Al-Shahrastānī has long ago argued, that "A strict form of anthropomorphism had existed amongst the Jews; not, indeed all of them, but in a section of them...The Shī`a of our faith also fell into one of two extremes: one was to make some of the Imāms like God, the other to make God like a man. When the Mu`tazilites and scholastic theologians arose, some of the Shī'ites abandoned their extreme views and adopted Mu`tazilism; some of the early leaders, on the other hand, adopted a literal interpretation and became anthropomorphists."[706] Contrary to what Watt and Goldziher argued, the Muslims did not seem to have much contact and interaction with Gnostics by that time. On the other hand contacts and interaction with the Jews, first in Medina and then through mass conversion, were frequent and immanent. The influx of the biblical stories and interpretations to the Islamic circles and sciences through the known Jewish converts to Islam like Ka`ab al-Aḥbār,[707] could have easily brought many Muslims face to face with the Qur'ānic poetical expressions. Such an encounter with the Jewish material and thought could have resulted in anthropomorphic interpretations of the above mentioned Qur'ānic and *ḥadīth* expressions, as al-Malaṭṭī has argued.[708] Therefore, Jewish influence *vis a vis* anthropomorphism in some early Muslim circles seems more immanent than any other external factor.

The issues of free will and predestination *(al-Qaḍā wa al-Qadar)* and the divine attributes are connected with the other extreme i.e., the abstract transcendental tendency among the Muslims. Discussions regarding these issues began in the Muslim community during the time of the later *Companions* like `Abdullah b. `Umar, `Abdullah b. Abbās, Anas b. Mālik, Abū Hurayrah, and Jābir b. `Abdullah.[709] Ja`ad b. Darham,[710] Jaham b. Ṣafwān,[711] Ma`bad al-Juhanī,[712] and Ghilān al-Dimashqī[713] were the pioneers in this area of the theological debates. Ja`ad is reported to have initiated the issue of negating the attributes of God such as speech and others, in view to avoid anthropomorphism. Ibn Kathīr reports, that Ja`ad was the first to claim that "the Qur'ān was created", to avoid the presence of two eternals and uncreated beings.[714] Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Dārmī, Ibn al-`Imād, and al-Kawtharī argue, that Ja`ad was the first to negate the divine attributes and actions, and to interpret metaphorically the Qur'ānic verses emphasizing the attributes and actions of God.[715] He denied that God talked with Moses or took Abraham as a friend, as is commonly

understood from the Qur'ānic passages.[716] Al-Nashshār argues, that Ja`ad denied the eternal speech and not the contingent speech of God.[717] Madelung explains Ja`ad's position in the following words: "God, in other words, does not speak in a literal sense. In order to communicate he creates the sound of speech which can be heard. This sound is figuratively called speech, although it is not genuine speech. It is easy to understand why the case of Moses is singled out for special mention. For Moses, according to Koranic doctrine, was the only prophet who heard God speaking directly, without an intermediary, to himself. The rule is, however, general. All "speech" of God, including the Koran, is created, not spoken, by God."[718] It is evident that Ja`ad did not intend to deny the Qur'ānic passage, but the anthropomorphic implications of accepting God talking to Moses directly. God, in Ja`ad's view, is also "exalted above being the friend of any creature." He interpreted "the word *ḫalīl* in the Koranic verse (IV 125) "God has taken Abraham as a *ḫalīl*" as meaning needy, derived from *ḫalla*, need, rather than friend, derived from *ḫulla*, friendship."[719] Al-Ghurābī argues, that Ja`ad's denial of the divine speech consists in the fact that "God cannot be attributed the human attributes such as speech or its opposite... both of these attributes are human in nature."[720] According to Madelung, Ja`ad's emphatic stand on the issue of divine attributes "constituted an attack on the anthropomorphic, personifying concept of God of traditionalist Sunnism."[721] Such a fear of anthropomorphism and similarity between God and His creation led Ja`ad also to emphasize predestination, and that the true creator of the human actions is God and not the human beings themselves.[722]

It was Jaham b. Safwan (d. 127/745) who treated the issue of divine attributes at length. He met Ja`ad at Kufa and followed his theology. Like Ja`ad, he emphasized the absolute transcendence of God by refuting all possibilities of anthropomorphism, and metaphorically interpreted all the Qur'ānic verses *(ta'wīl)* that could lead to any doubt of anthropomorphism regarding God. Al-Ash`arī reports, that Jaham even denied that God is "a thing (*shay*) because that is similarity with other things."[723] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal reports Jaham arguing that the Qur'ānic verse "there is none like unto Him" means, that "there is nothing from all the things which is like unto Him. He is under the seven earths as He is above the Throne. There is no place where He is not. He cannot be present at a specific place and absent from the other. He did not and does not speak. Nobody has seen Him in this world and nobody will see Him in the hereafter. He cannot be described or known by any attribute or action.... No mind can apprehend Him..."[724] Ibn Tamiyyah reports that Jaham denied even the Beautiful Names of God mentioned in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth,* as discussed earlier. That is the reason according to Ibn Tamiyyah that Jaham's followers were called "Extremists or absolute deniers".[725]

A thorough study of Jaham's position on the issue of divine attributes and names, seems to indicate that he was not an absolute denier of the divine attributes as is usually connected with his name. Jaham absolutely denied only those attributes that could lead to any similarity or comparison between God and the creation. He divided the divine attributes into two categories i.e., the ones specific to God only such as powerful, creator, the giver of life and death; and the others that are common between both God and man such as life, knowledge, intention etc. Al-Shahrastani reports, that Jaham "agreed with the Mu`tazila in denying the eternal attributes, but he also added other doctrines. These are as follows: (1) It is not lawful to apply to God an attribute which is also applicable to creatures, because this would imply likeness between God and creatures. He, therefore, denies that God is living and knowing, but maintains that he is powerful,

an agent and a creator, because to no creature can be attributed power, action, and creation."[726] Wilferd Madelung observes, that "The motivation of this doctrine is obvious in the context of the general theological views of al-Gahm and his followers. God, being different from his creation in every respect, cannot be described with any of the attributes that apply to man. Only attributes belonging exclusively to God, like powerful, creator, acting (for in al-Gahm's doctrine only God is *fā'il*, acting), giver of life and death, can be said to describe him properly."[727] That is why Jaham argued, that "man is determined in all actions by divine power, including the acts of faith and virtue or faithlessness and vice."[728] He further argued, that "a man does not have power over anything, nor can he be said to have capacity [to act]. Man is absolutely determined in his deeds. He has neither power, nor will, nor choice. God creates deeds in man just as he produces actions in all inanimate objects, and it is only in a metaphorical sense that, as with inanimate objects, deeds can be ascribed to man..."[729] Due to such an emphasis upon the absolute divine transcendence with the exclusion of everything else, the followers of Jaham have been called "*al-Jabriyyah* or determinists".[730]

Consequently, to al-Nashshār, Jaham was not an absolute denier of God's attributes or their eternity, but just an adventurous soul emphasizing to "purge God of all shadows of similarity and anthropomorphism."[731] Jaham went as far as denying the everlasting nature of the Paradise and Hell to maintain such an absolute divine transcendence. Al-Shahrastānī reports Jaham arguing that "All motion in heaven and hell will come to an end. Paradise and hell will both pass away after those who have gone to paradise have enjoyed its bliss, and those who have gone to hell have suffered its torments."[732] According to al-Fārūqī, Jaham and his followers denied "eternity of Paradise and Hell because they presumed God alone to be eternal."[733] Jaham argued that the time will come when everything other than God would perish.[734] Consequently, such a transcendent God of Jaham with the exclusion of everything else, argues Seale, "was closer to the Greek Absolute than to the God of the Qur'ān."[735] Due to the later influence of Ja`ad and Jaham's theological positions over Mu`atazilites and others, Madkūr crowns them with the title of "the founders of philosophical theology in Islam."[736] Seale describes Jaham as the real founder of Mu`tazilah instead of Wāṣil b. `Atā.[737] Watt, on the other hand, argues against such a crowning of him.[738]

Ma`bad b. Khālid al-Juhanī (79/699) disagreed with Jaham over the issue of predestination and argued, that "man is free and capable and therefore author of his deeds, whether good or evil."[739] On the other hand, Ma`bad and his follower Ghīlān agreed with Ja`ad and Jaham in refuting anthropomorphisms. They contended that the attributes pertaining to "the divine person, such as hand, sight, and hearing, were to be taken figuratively, so that the transcendence of God may be preserved. Predication of the attributes to God, they warned, is unlike that of an accident or quality of the substance to which it adheres. For the attribute, they claimed, is another index for the divine self."[740]

The scholars differ over the source of origin of such an abstract transcendental thought and negation of divine attributes in the above discussed *Jabariyyah* and *Qadariyyah* circles. A group of scholars attribute such a development to the Christian influences. For instance, De Boer argues that the Islamic "doctrinal system has certainly been determined the most by Christian influences. In Damascus the formation of Muslim Dogmas was affected by Orthodox and Monophysite

teachings, and in Basra and Baghdad rather perhaps by Nestorian and Gnostic theories. Little of the literature belonging to the earliest period of this movement has come down to us, but we cannot be wrong in assigning a considerable influence to personal intercourse and regular school-instruction. Not much was learned in the East at that time out of books, any more than it is to-day: more was learned from the lips of the teacher. The similarity between the oldest doctrinal teachings in Islam and the dogmas of Christianity is too great to permit any one to deny that they are directly connected."[741] He further argues, that the issue of divine attributes received the greatest prominence "under the influence assuredly of Christian dogmatics..."[742] D. B. Macdonald argues, that "in the development of the Murji'tes and Qadarites it is impossible to mistake the workings of the dialectic refinements of Greek theology as developed in the Byzantine and Syrian schools. It is worth notice, too, that, while the political heresies of the Shi'ites and Kharijites held sway mostly in Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia, these more religious heresies seem to have arisen in Syria first and especially at Damascus, the seat of the Umayyads."[743] He, emphasizing the significance of polemic treatises of John of Damascus and his pupil Theodorus Abucara, argues, that "The close agreement of Murji'ites and Qadarite ideas with those formulated and defended by John of Damscus and by the Greek Church generally can only be so explained... In this case, also, we are not to think of the Muslim divines as studying the writings of the Greek fathers, but as picking up ideas from them in practical intercourse and controversy."[744] Macdonald concludes, that "so far it is clear that the influence of Greek theology on Islam can hardly be overestimated. The one outstanding fact of the enormous emphasis laid by the both on the doctrine of the nature of God and His attributes is enough."[745] Seale,[746] Gibb and Kramers,[747] and Wolfson[748] are just a few more examples of this line of approach. Among the Muslim scholars, al-Ash`arī,[749] al-Shahrastānī,[750] al-Taftāzānī,[751] and al-Ījī[752] have emphasized the resemblance between the Christian theology represented by the Greek Church Fathers and Jahmite's and Qadarite's approach regarding the divine attributes.

A good number of Muslim scholars attribute the above discussed transcendental tendency to the Jewish influences. Ibn al-Athīr,[753] Ibn Qutaybah,[754] al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī,[755] Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn Nubātah al-Maṣrī are just a few examples. Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Nubātah al-Maṣrī even pinpoint the names of the Jewish individuals such as Abān b. Sam`ān and Ṭālūt b. al-'A`ṣam who, according to them, taught Ja`ad b. Darham doctrines like the "created Qur'ān", and hence the abstract approach regarding the divine attributes.[756]

A. J. Wensinck, on the other hand, argues that "neither orthodox Islam nor any of the sects merely took over the views of Christianity. There is no intellectual compulsion in any quarter, nor a special openness to foreign influence."[757] He also observes, that "the history of Muslim dogmatics follows a logical course-that is to say, the sequence of the ideas is not of foreign origin, but is indigenous. At the same time, however, something must be attributed to the influence of Christianity."[758] Watt also argues that "The parallel, however, is not quite so close as it appears to be... Even if the similarity were to be closer than this, it does not necessarily follow that there was any direct influence. Islamic theology is now seen to have been brought about by inner tensions. It is thus not to be supposed that Muslim theologians copied Christian conceptions simply for the sake of copying. What is possible is that, having some awareness of Christian conceptions, they found among them items which were useful to them in maintaining their position against Islamic rivals." Watt further observes that "This awareness might come about in two ways. There were

many Christians who had become Muslims without completely forgetting their Christian ideas; some may have become theologians, or at least talked with theologians. Also a number of religious discussions between Muslims and Christians are known to have taken place. It is only in this indirect way by providing suitable materials or lines of argument that Christian or any other extraneous thought can have influenced Islamic theology. What in the first place made men want to argue came entirely from within Islam."[759] The views of Wensinck and Watt seem to be a more logical interpretation of the absolute transcendental tendency among some of the Muslim circles than the previous ones; therefore, the same views are held by many modern Muslim scholars such as `Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd,[760] Irfān,[761] al-Nashshār,[762] and Madkūr.[763]

It was the school of Mu`tazilah[764] which took over most of the Qadarite's ideas like free will, refutation of anthropomorphisms, negation of most of the divine attributes, and the route of metaphorical interpretations to meet their ends. So strongly, observes Wensinck, "was the likeness between the two sects felt, that their names are often used without discrimination. Yet the distinction between them is historically well documented."[765] Gibb and Kramers count Ghīlān, the founder of Qadariyyah, as "among the fathers of the Mu`tazilah."[766] The recognized founder of Mu`tazilah, Wāṣil b. `Atā, on the other hand, was a contemporary of Ja`ad and Jaham. Jaham's theology, argues Gibb, "left distinct traces on that of the Mu`tazilah; the doctrine of the created Kur'an which was later to become a fundamental Mu`tazilah thesis was probably formulated by Djahm and in the doctrine of the divine attributes there are coincidences on both sides which cannot be accidental. On the other hand, there are many serious differences which are probably practical and political in their nature. Djahm professed in the most extreme form the doctrine of predestination (*djabr*). All the actions of man are involuntary. Wāṣil maintained the opposite thesis of free will."[767] These historical realities tell us that the Mu`tazilah did not simply copy or blindly follow one person or a sect. They came at a time when rational inquiry and speculative argumentation along with Greek philosophy and logic had already entered the Islamic theological debates. They picked and chose from the already existing religious ideas and theological expositions and helped create a systematic and speculative dogmatics of Islam. This movement, Netton quotes W. Thomson as observing, "never produced a synthetic scheme of thought, nor even an eclectic system... but rather the interpretation of certain inherited doctrines in favor of a particular view of divine nature and human destiny..."[768]

It is commonly argued that the Mu`tazilites were liberals and free thinkers. Contrary to that, the religious vigor, piety, missionary zeal, and commitment on the part of many Mu`tazilites is a proof, as Watt observes, that they were "quite definite Muslims."[769] Gibb and Kramers argue, that "Nothing could then be less justifiable than to regard Mu`tazila as philosophers, free thinkers or liberals. On the contrary, they are theologians of the strict school; their ideal is dogmatic orthodoxy; philosophy for them is only an *ancilla fidei*; they are nothing less than tolerant. What they created was Muslim scholasticism."[770] It must be added that the Mu`tazilites, in the first place, utilized Greek logic and rationalism to support the Islamic revelation and dogmas and to convince non-Muslims of their vitality, but later on went to the extreme of giving priority to the reason (*al-`Aql*) over the revelation (*al-Waḥy*), as Jarrullah observes.[771] While the Qur'ān, argues Rippin, 'had its place in the discussions, it was not so much a source, when used by Mu`tazila, as a testimony to the veracity of the claims which they were making. The basic assumptions of the Greek philosophical system (as understood and transmitted through Christian scholars) was the

fundamental element underlying the whole position; it was argued that reason, and not only traditional sources, could be used as a source of reliable knowledge for human beings."[772] This view of the role of the reason, Rippin further argues, "is significant in terms of the ultimate fate of the Mu`tazila, for it implied that the legal scholars of Islam had, in fact, no particular claim to sole possession of the right interpretation of all Muslim dogma."[773] In addition to that, Mu`tazila got militant once given the political authority. F. M. Denny argues, that the Mu`tazilah "far from being liberal intellectuals who wanted to accommodate the world to vision of rationality and cooperation, were proponents of a strict and militants Islam which they sought to impose uniformly on their wayward coreligionists and to spread to the non-Muslims by means of propaganda."[774] This militant attitude along with many other factors brought their down fall.[775]

The Mu`tazila founded their doctrine on five axioms.[776] The first two of them i.e., *al-tawhid* (the unity of God) and *al-`Adl* (the justice of God), were directly related to the nature of God and His actions. Like the Qadarites, they emphasized the uniqueness, transcendence, and unicity of God at all costs. If the Orthodoxy believed that the divine attributes were not God and were eternal, then, to Mu`tazila, transcendence could no longer be maintained. Mu`tazila argued, that "Divine knowledge is either eternal or it is created. If eternal, it is either in God, outside of God, or nowhere. If in God, then God is a theater where change takes place. If outside of God, then God is not omniscient and someone else is. And knowledge cannot be nowhere. It is somewhere and eternal. But it cannot be outside of God for that involves polytheism. It must therefore be in God and intrinsic to Him."[777] When Wāṣil b. `Aṭā, the founder of Mu`tazilah, first negated the attributes, according to al-Shahrastānī, "the doctrine was undeveloped and was explained by Wāṣil b. `Aṭā in simple terms as follows: It is universally agreed that the existence of two eternal gods is impossible; so to assert the existence of an eternal entity, or an eternal attribute [in God], would be to say that there were two gods."[778] Wāṣil, in Macdonald's view, "reduced God to a vague unity, a kind of eternal oneness."[779] The later Mu`tazilites, like Abū Hudhayl M. al-`Allāf (d. 226), made great advances regarding the issue of divine attributes utilizing the rational devices of the ancient philosophy. Al-`Allāf taught, that "the qualities were not *in* His essence, and thus separable from it, thinkable apart from it, but they *were* His essence. Thus, God was omnipotent by His omnipotence, but it *was* His essence and not *in* His essence. He was omniscient by His omniscience and it *was* His essence. Further, he held that these qualities must be either negations or relations. Nothing positive can be asserted of them, for that would mean that there was in God the complexity of subject and predicate, being and quality; and God is absolute unity... He endeavored-and in this he was followed by most of the Mu`tazilites-to cut down the number of God's attributes."[780] Al-Shahrastānī reports al-`Allāf as arguing that, "the attributes they are not additional to his essence in the form of entities subsisting in it, but his essence itself. They may be regarded either negatively or as concomitants..."[781] Al-Ash`arī reports, that al-`Allāf observed: "if you say: "God has knowledge" you affirmed knowledge of God which is He Himself and negated ignorance. When you said, "God is alive" you affirmed life which is Allāh Himself and negated the death from Him. (Same is the case with all the attributes). He used to say that God has face but His face is His ownself... He metaphorically interpreted the verses containing the word "*yad* [meaning hand]" as meaning His bounty, and interpreted the verse (made under my eye) [20:39] as meaning his [God] knowledge."[782] Al-Ash`arī also reports Ḍirār as arguing that "the statement "God is knowledge" means that He is not ignorant... He is alive means He is not dead."[783]

Al-Naẓẓām (d. 231), according to Macdonald, "has the credit among later historians of having made use, to high degree, of the doctrines of the Greek philosophers. He was one of the Satans of the Qadarites, say they; he read the books of the philosophers and mingled their teachings with the doctrines of Mu`tazilites. He taught, in the most absolute way, that God could do nothing to a creature, either in this world or in the next, that was not for the creature's good and in accordance with strict justice. It was not only that God could not do it; He had not the power to do anything evil. Evidently the personality of God was fast vanishing behind an absolute law of right."[784] He, like Dirar, argued that "the statement that "God is knowledge" means affirming His essence and negating ignorance from Him...Same is the case with all attributes of His essence."[785] The difference between al-`Allāf and al-Naẓẓām was, that al-`Allāf did not negate the attributes altogether. He affirmed them in the essence of God. Al-Naẓẓām, on the other hand, was closer to the philosophers in denying the attributes absolutely and replacing instead the essence of God itself. Al-Shahrastānī observed, that "The difference between saying that God is knowing with his essence and not by knowledge, and that he is knowing by knowledge which is his essence, is that the first proposition denies the attributes, while the second affirms either an essence which is identical with his attributes, or an attribute which is identical with the essence."[786] Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (850-915) did a "subtle refinement of the doctrine of the divine attributes"[787] by contending that these attributes are "aḥwāl" states "of the being of the entity of which they are attributes. In order to do that, he turned to the grammarians and grammatical theory."[788] He held that "God is knowing by his essence, is powerful, living and so on by his essence. The meaning of the expression 'by his essence' is that God does not need in his knowing either an attribute which is knowledge, or a 'mode' by which he is knowing. According to Abū Hāshim, on the other hand, God is knowing by his essence in the sense that he has a mode, which is an attribute, recognizable over and above his being an existing essence. The attribute, however, can only be known along with the essence and not apart from it. Thus he maintained that there are modes which are attributes neither existing nor non-existing, neither known nor unknown; that is, in themselves they are not known as attributes, but are known only with the essence. Reason recognizes a necessary distinction between knowing a thing in itself and knowing it with an attribute. So one who knows the essence of God does not *ipso facto* know that he is knowing. Similarly, One who knows substance does not *ipso facto* know that it is in a place and is a substrate of accidents."[789] Al-Qāḍī `Abd al-Jabbar reduced the attributes only to three i.e., the knowledge (*al-`ilm*), power (*al-qudrah*), and perception(*al-idrāk*). He insisted, like his predecessors, that these attributes are not other than God's essence.[790]

Al-Fārūqī summarizes Mu`tazilite's position on the issue of attributes as follows: "all divine attributes must be declared either negative, denying that their opposites are predicable of God; or positive, affirming a facet of the divine self, not an accident or quality. The Islamic notion that the Qur'ān was the eternal word of God invited the same kind of argument. The Mu`tazilah maintained that the Qur'ān was created by God in time to fulfill a purpose He had for man and creation. The evidence they adduced was that the Qur'ān was composed of language, of sound and meanings established by human custom, that it was kept in ink and paper and memorized completely by humans. It cannot be "in" or "of " God. On the other hand, to hold that the Qur'ān is "outside" of God and eternal is to affirm the existence of another eternal being besides God."[791] Rahman observes, that "with that of the Divine Attributes, the Mu`tazila went to extreme limits. Starting with a genuine anxiety to safeguard the idea of Divine transcendence, they explained

away all expressions of Scripture and the Ḥadīth that contained anthropomorphism in a rational spirit and ended up by negating all the Divine Attributes."[792] The Mu`tazila also refuted the orthodox dogma of the beatific vision of God in paradise. God, they claimed, "cannot be beheld by the human eye, even in Paradise, for only material bodies can be seen. Hence, the Qur'ānic verse affirming same (75:22) must be interpreted to mean something else, such as consciousness of the divine presence."[793] They interpreted the related Qur'ānic verses metaphorically and even rejected the *aḥādīth* proving the same by discrediting some of the narrators in the link.[794] Al-Khayyāṭ reports Abū Mūsā al-Murdār as declaring, that anybody who claims that "Allāh will be seen by the eyes without how (*bilā kayf*) is a disbeliever. Same is the one who doubts him being a disbeliever..."[795] Such a strict position was taken by the Mu`tazilites to avoid similarity between the Creator and the creatures, and to avoid anthropomorphism which, to them, was equal to disbelief.

Finally, the Mu`tazila metaphorically interpreted all the verses of the Qur'ān that ascribed to God, face, hands, eye etc., and also mandated such interpretations to the others.[796] Despite "their several disagreements on points of doctrinal details", observes Netton, "most of the Mu`tazilites were agreed on a non-literal mode of interpretation of much of the anthropomorphic data about God in the Qur'an."[797] They interpreted the "face" in the verses "every thing will perish except the face of thy Lord" (55:27) as meaning the being of God Himself.[798] His hand was interpreted as "favor or bounty"[799], the eye as "knowledge", the settlement upon the Throne (*istiwā*) as "dominance", the coming down in the later part of the night as meaning the closeness of His "mercy".[800] Watt observes, that the Mu`tazilites dealt "with the anthropomorphisms by the method of *ta'wīl* or 'metaphorical interpretation'. More precisely this meant that they claimed they were justified in interpreting single words in the Qur'ānic text according to a secondary or metaphorical meaning found elsewhere in the Qur'ān or in pre-Islamic poetry. Thus, in the phrase (38:75) about God 'creating with his hands' they said that hands meant 'grace' (*ni`ma*), and justified this by a usage roughly parallel to our colloquial phrase 'I'll give you a hand'. Similarly *wajh*, usually 'face', was said to mean 'essence'. Verses which spoke of God being seen in the world to come were interpreted in the light of other verses where 'see' did not mean physical sight. In some ways this method of interpretation is artificial; but at least it keeps thinkers at the 'grass roots' of religious experience and away from an abstract academic discussion of relations between attributes and essence."[801] Similarly, observes Anawati, "*ḥadīth* that go the wrong way will be rejected. It is necessary to maintain, at whatever cost, the absolute divine unity, strict monotheism."[802]

It becomes evident from the previous analysis of the Mu`tazilite's position regarding the divine attributes and Qur'ānic anthropomorphic expressions, that Mu`tazilites' sole effort was geared towards maintaining the transcendence, uniqueness, and otherness of God, and His sheer incomparability with anything other than Himself. The transcendence of God in the above sense, to them, was the essence of the Islamic religion and revelation, and it must be maintained at all costs. In the light of this observation, it becomes easy to understand al-Ash`arī's long account of the Mu`tazilite's Creed, each word and phrase of which seems to be an effort to affirm such a strict belief in the absolute divine transcendence. Al-Ash`arī reports, that "The Mu`tazila agree that God is one; there is nothing like him; he is hearing, seeing; he is not a body (*jism, shabah, juththa*), not a form, not flesh and blood, not an individual (*shakhṣ*), not substance nor attribute; he has no color, taste, smell, feel, no heat, cold, moisture not dryness, no length, breadth nor

depth, no joining together nor separation, no movement, rest nor division; he has no sections no parts, no limbs nor members; he is not subject to directions, left, right, in front of, behind, above, below; no place comprehends him, no time passes over him; inadmissible for him are contiguity, separatedness and inherence in places; he is neither characterized by any attribute of creatures indicating their originatedness, nor by finitude, nor extension, nor directional motion; he is not bounded; not begetting nor begotten, magnitudes do not comprehend him nor veils cover him; the senses do not attain him; he is not comparable with men and does not resemble creatures in any respect; infirmities and sufferings do not affect him; he is unlike whatever occurs to the mind or is pictured in the imagination...eyes do not see him, sight does not attain him, imagination does not comprehend him; he is heard by hearing; (he is) a thing, not as the things, knowing, powerful, living, not as (men are) knowing..."[803] Watt observes that "This passage expresses very well the otherness and transcendence of God which has always been prominent strand in Islamic thought. This has, of course, a Qur'ānic basis, and indeed some of the phrases in the passage...are from the Qur'ān..."[804]

In spite of their great contributions to the intellectual life of Islam and being "founders of the discipline of speculative or philosophical theology",[805] the Mu`tazila went far from the spirit of Islamic revelation and hence from the outlook of the ordinary Muslim. "To insist on the bare unity of God", argues Watt, "was a tidy rational theory, but it did not do justice to the fullness of religious experience. The negative statements of Dirar and an-Naẓẓām are unsatisfactory to the ordinary worshipper..."[806] The Mu`tazilites reduced the vivid and living God of Muhammad, as Macdonald argues, to "a spirit, and a spirit, too, of the vaguest kind."[807] They, to Rahman, "denuded God of all content and rendered Him unsatisfactory for religious consciousness."[808] They, observes Netton, "made God more unknowable rather than less, and dug a wider gulf between man and his Creator. A dry hermeneutic intellectualism restricted the former's mental image of his Deity..."[809] Such a concept, observes Watt, "leads to an abstract, bare and featureless conception of God, which robs the religious consciousness of much that is precious to it."[810] Or in the words of Gibb it turns it into "a vast old monument, beneath which the element of personal religious experience seemed to be crushed out of existence. Fortunately for Islam, it was not to be so."[811] According to Gibb, the simple and minor anthropomorphism which speaks of God in terms of some of the categories and attributes of the human figure "was far less dangerous than anthroposophism which reasons about God in terms of human wisdom."[812] The Mu`tazila, however, "exercised an influence indirectly. An important role was played by al-Ash`arī who, after being trained as a Mu`tazilite, was 'converted' to a form of Ḥanbalite view. There were other channels, however, by which Mu`tazilite's ideas entered the main stream... It was then left to other men to sift these ideas so as to discover which were genuinely assimilable. In the end a great many ideas were retained, though seldom in precisely the form in which Mu`tazilites had presented them."[813] A good example of this assimilation process is the method of metaphorical interpretation which was adopted by later Sunnite theologians like al-Baghdādī, al-Juwaynī, and al-Ghazālī. Al-Rāzī observed that "all the Islamic sects affirm that the metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is a must regarding few of the (apparent words) of some of the Qur'ānic verses and the Prophetic reports."[814]

On the other hand, the philosophers and later the Ismā`ilites were those who, in the name of God's unity and transcendence, absolutely negated the attributes of God. Philosophers like al-Fārābī

(870/259 A.H.-950/339 A.H.), Ibn Sīnā (979-1037), and Ibn Rushd (1126-98) in essence stripped God of all the possible attributes ascribed to Him by the Qur'ān.[815] Al-Fārābī's First Cause and necessarily existent One is indivisible in His substance and indefinable or ineffable.[816] He is Intellect (*`Aql*) and the Discernment of the Intellect (*ma`qūl*) at the same time. He is eternally the All-Knowledge because He knows His Being (*ya`lamu dhātahu*).[817] Al-Ghazālī accuses al-Fārābī and other philosophers of denying God's knowledge of the particulars and details of things. Ibn al-Jawzī accuses Ibn Sīnā of the same.[818] According to al-Ghazālī, the philosophers God is closer to the ignorance rather than to the knowledge.[819] But Ibn Rushd and many modern scholars like Abū Raydah and A. Maḥmūd free al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā of this charge.[820] The fact of the matter is that in his books, al-Fārābī disagrees with Aristotle on the issue of God's knowledge regarding *juz'iyyat (details of things)* and argues that God knows everything with His eternal knowledge.[821] Al-Fārābī refers to the Beautiful Names of God and recognizes them as leading to His Exalted Majesty without adding or allowing anything additional or external to His being or essence.[822] These names, to al-Fārābī, merely denote the Divine relationship with the creatures.[823] I. R. Netton observes that, "In his second mode al-Fārābī emphasized among other things the different facets of perfection of the Deity, while underlining the fact that all His attributes were subsumed in, and not distinct from, His essence."[824] Madkūr sees in al-Fārābī the origination of all the later theological debates regarding the divine attributes.[825] Al-Fārābī mostly defines God in negative propositions and statements to maintain His absolute transcendence. He renders God to a mere intellect or *`aql* as Netton observes: "The logic of al-Fārābī's identification of attribute and essence means that God is intellect in action (*`aql bi `l-fi`l*) as well as wisdom, truth, and life themselves."[826] Unlike many others, `Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd does not see in al-Fārābī an un-Islamic, excessive or extravagant immersion in the divine transcendence, but sees his emphasis upon the divine transcendence as an off shoot of the Islamic concept of God's otherness.[827]

Ibn Sīnā's Necessary Being[828] is essentially one. According to Netton, "Ibn Sina admits that it is possible for God to have a variety of characteristics (Persian: *ṣifāt-hā*) without there being any kind of resultant multiplicity in His essence (*dhat*). But this admission implies no desire to indulge in a Mu`tazilite exercise of allegorizing the attributes out of all recognition into something else. The key is rather a very Neoplatonic urge towards negativity, similar to that which was previously encountered in the work of al-Farabi. For really, 'all [the Necessary Existent's] so-called attributes are privations."[829] Ibn Sīnā argues, that "Since it is established that God is a Necessary Being, that He is One in every respect, that He is exalted above all causes... since it is further established that His Attributes do not augment His Essence, and that He is qualified by the Attributes of Praise and Perfection; it follows necessarily that we must state that He is Knowing, Living, Willing, Omnipotent, Speaking, Seeing, Hearing, and Possessed of all the other Loveliest Attributes. It is also necessary to recognize that His Attributes are to be classified as negative, positive, and a compound of the two: since His Attributes are of this order, it follows that their multiplicity does not destroy His Unity or contradict the necessary nature of His Being. Pre-eternity for instance is essentially the negation of not-being in the first place, and denial of causality and of primality in the second place; similarly the term One means that He is indivisible in every respect, both verbally and actually. When it is stated that He is a Necessary being, this means that He is a Being without cause, and that He is the Cause of other than Himself: this is a combination of the negative and the positive."[830] All these attributes boil down to "... nothing but (1) union, where 'union' is an idea in the intelligence rather than in essence, or (2) negation (*nafy*) and denial. In So

doing they do not imply existence of many characteristics, but rather an omission of many characteristics."[831] To further emphasize the otherness of God, Ibn Sīnā insisted upon emanation of the First Intelligence, "Since the first thing to emanate from God was not a body, it follows that it was an abstract substance, namely, the First Intelligence."[832]

In short, the philosophers argued about such an abstract and absolute divine transcendence which differed with both the Mu`tazilite and the Orthodoxy's understanding of the deity, and was very close, as Madkūr observes, "to Aristotle's Metaphysics."[833] The Isma`ilites[834] followed the philosophers in stripping God of all the attributes, and in ascribing all of the divine attributes to the First Intelligence.[835] This First Intelligence rather than the God Himself seemed to be the true Deity because God of the Isma`ilites and the philosophers was the bare Reality and the absolute unknowable One. The God seemed to need the First Intelligence to create, sustain, protect, and love. In an effort to exalt God beyond all possible limitations and needs, the philosophers ended up binding Him too tight with their theory of emanation and hence with several of the limitations. Netton differentiates between the Mu`tazilite's deity and that of the Neoplatonic's deity of the philosophers in the following words: "The transcendent Deity of the Mu`tazilites, whose several Qur'ānic attributes were metamorphosed by allegory, was not bound up with ideas of emanation, nor with hypostases such as the Universal Intellect (*al- `Aql al-Kullī*) and the Universal Soul (*al-Nafs al-Kulliyya*). But the unknowable God of medieval Neoplatonic Islam was. The end result was the development of a transcendental theology in Islam, with the Ismā`īlī sect as its political and spiritual apotheosis, which was far more complex than anything of which the Mu`tazila could have dreamed."[836]

There was nothing in the Qur'ān allowing such a hierarchy of beings or hypostases as is required by emanation. The philosophers emanation scheme, as Madkūr observes, did not realize the goal assigned by the Qur'ān to the creation. The philosophers creation was not dependent upon God's will or power.[837] Such a scheme was totally non-Qur'ānic and closely related to the emanation theory of Neoplatonism. In this process, as Netton observes, "the simple monotheistic model or 'face' of the QUR'ĀNIC God was remolded to an image and likeness of which Plotinus might only sometimes have approved, and of which Muhammad would have assuredly despaired, even if he had understood it."[838] By this "alienation and Neoplatonism", the "old paradigm was transformed into another full and new paradigm, the 'Paradigm of Islamic Transcendence.'...And the transformation meant that all words used of 'God' were similarly transformed and could only be used as analogical signs, however inadequately."[839] Netton concludes his book by observing that "For the stress on transcendence among some thinkers in medieval Islam, if pursued to its ultimate point, leads semiotically, logically, and inexorably to the 'death' of the word 'God,' though none, of course, articulated it like that."[840] Netton's observation may seem to be an extreme conclusion, but in a sense it is true. The philosophers practically removed God from the day-to-day affairs of the world so much so that it became just an abstract idea. Such a concept of God was too abstract to generate the response intended by the Qur'ān, specially so in regard to common believers. On the other hand, it must be noticed that such an abstract transcendental tendency among many Muslim philosophers like al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, did not spring from apostasy or rebellion against the Qur'ān or the Islamic concept of the Deity. It was perhaps their commitment and devotion to the divine transcendence that made them go that far in abstraction. Therefore, their views regarding the divine transcendence as a whole cannot be dubbed as absolutely un-Īslamic or non-Qur'ānic.

Although they lack the proper balance maintained by the Qur'ān between the divine transcendence and immanence, still their concerns regarding the absolute divine transcendence are an off shoot of the Qur'ānic emphasis upon the divine otherness and hence a great sign of the philosophers faith and trust in the Qur'ān. Certainly they represented the utmost extremes of the transcendental thought in Islam.

Al-Ḥashwiyyah[841] or *Mujassimah* (corporealists),[842] as they were labeled by their opponents,[843] went to the other extreme. They took the seemingly anthropomorphic phrases of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth literally to the extent of comparing such phrases with their human counterparts. Although such a trend was not confined to any specific sect or group,[844] Maḍar b. Muḥammad b. Khālid b. al-Walīd, Abū Muḥammad al-Asadī, Abū Abdullāh al-Baṣarī, Aḥmad b. `Atā, Kuhmus b. al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī (d. 139), and Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150) can be quoted as just a few examples of this trend among the traditionalists. They opposed the metaphorical interpretation of the revelation and strictly and literally followed the text insisting that revelation rather than the reason was the only true source of religious matters.[845] Al-Shahrastānī observes, that "According to them God has a form and possesses limbs and parts which are either spiritual or physical. It is possible for him to move from place to place, to descend and ascend, to be stationary and to be firmly seated... Ash`arī has reported on the authority of Muhammad b. `Īsā that Muḍar, Kuhmus, and Aḥmad al-Hujaimi allow the possibility of men touching God and shaking his hand; also that sincere Muslims may embrace him in this world as well as in the next, provided they attain in their spiritual endeavors to sufficient degree of purity of heart and genuine union with God." He further observes that, "Ka`bī reports of some of them that they say that God can be seen even in this life, and that God and men may visit one another. Dāwūd al-Jawāribī is reported to have said: 'Do not question me about the pudendum or the beard, but you may ask me about anything else'. He said: "God is body, flesh and blood. He has members and limbs, such as hands and feet, head and tongue, two eyes and two ears; nevertheless, he is a body unlike other bodies, with flesh unlike other flesh, and blood unlike other blood. This is true also of his other attributes: he does not resemble any creature, nor does any creature resemble him."[846]

In spite of these literalists' emphasis upon the incomparability and non-resemblance of God with His creatures, they ascribed to him attributes and qualities used of bodies. Al-Shahrastānī reports that they took the Qur'ānic words like *istiwā*, *wajh* etc. literally "as they are understood when used of bodies. The same applies to words found in traditions, such as the word 'ṣūra' (form) in the saying of the Prophet: 'Adam was created in the form of the Most Merciful'; or his other sayings: 'Till the Most Powerful puts his foot in the fire...These and the like they understood in the same sense as would be understood of bodies. The Anthropomorphists have invented lies and added them to the traditions, attributing them to the Prophet; these were taken mostly from the Jews to whom anthropomorphism is natural... The Anthropomorphists also report that the Prophet said, 'God met me, shook hands with me, wrestled with me and put his hand between my shoulders, until I felt the coldness of his fingers."[847] There could not be any doubt about the fact that these literalists had a corporeal and anthropomorphic God in mind; whatever claims they might have made about the non-resemblance and incomparability of God. Al-Karāmiyyah, the followers of Muḥammad b. Karām (d. 255 A.H.),[848] followed such a corporeal concept of *al-Ḥashwiyyah* and became "upholder of corporealism and anthropomorphism."[849] According to al-Shahrastānī, Ibn

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modality (*bilā kayf*). It was sufficient to realize that the exact nature of such features as God's hand or eyes would be quite unlike any earthly hands or eyes. This was the classic stance of such theologians as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (AD 780-855) and al-Ash`arī (AD 873/4-935/6). Both were concerned to stress the reality of the anthropomorphic descriptions found in the Qur'ān. But logically, their attitude of *bilā kayf*, or refusal to examine the mode of these descriptions, resulted in an intellectual cul-de-sac in which acceptance triumphed over analysis and incomprehension over reason."[861] It was not an absolute intellectual cul-de-sac in the sense that it allowed a specific modality of the divine nature and reflection upon it, but with certain strict conditions and qualifications. James Pavlin observes, that "Thus using verses of the Qur'ān and authentic *Ḥadīth*, the traditional scholars maintained the reality of God's Names and Attributes without questioning how they exist in Him. In this way, a complete picture of the nature of God was formulated. For example, it is confirmed that God has an Essence (*Dhāt*) and a Self (*Nafs*), that He has ninety-nine beautiful Names, that He interacts with His creation through actions and words, that He knows all things and wills all things into existence, and that He is beyond comprehension and is only known by the descriptions He has revealed. For the traditionalists, this was accepted based on the prohibition of asking how God's Attributes exist."[862] Moreover, such a cul-de-sac was not directed specifically to anti-intellectualism or use of reason, but was meant for a specific religious reason. Watt explains the reason for this intellectual cul-de-sac observing, that the "Orthodoxy has been accused of making God similar to man. This charge they indignantly denied, and they inveighed against *tashbīh* as vehemently as the Mu`tazila. They agreed that God was not corporeal and that He transcended and was different from all creatures; and in this they were quite genuine, for it was one side of the traditional Islamic outlook. At the same time, however, they clung to the text of the Qur'ān, which they regarded as the very words of God. If the Qur'ān spoke of God's hands and face, then God must have hands and face. How God Who is incorporeal has hands and a face may be difficult to understand, but this difficulty is not a valid reason for rejecting the phrases of Scripture or explaining them away by the method of *ta'wīl*. One must maintain both the authority of Scripture and the incorporeality of God, even if one cannot reconcile them intellectually. In the doctrine of *balkayfiyya* this position was regularized and a formal acknowledgment made of the limits of the human intellect."[863]

That such a formula was intended to acknowledge sheer human dependence upon the Word of God and to maintain its authority over the reason, and not in any way or form to uphold anthropomorphism, is substantiated by the position taken by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal regarding the seemingly anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān. Ibn Ḥanbal, who was often accused of literalism and corporealism by his opponents, did not take an absolute literal approach regarding such expressions of the Qur'ān. The stern and classical position of Ibn Ḥanbal against the anthropomorphic conception of God can be noticed from his strong opposition to any anthropomorphic description of these Qur'ānic phrases. Al-Shahrastānī reports, that Ibn Ḥanbal said: "Whoever moved his hand while reading the Qur'ān (xxxviii. 75), "I created with my hands," ought to have his hand cut off; and whosoever stretched forth his finger in repeating the saying of Muhammad, "The heart of the believer is between two fingers of the Merciful," deserved to have his fingers torn out."[864] Watt rightly observes at another place, that "There were naive anthropomorphists among the Traditionists, but he (Ibn Ḥanbal) opposed these as vigorously as he opposed the Mu`tazilites; he insisted that the anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān are to be understood "without stating the precise manner of their existence" (*bi-la kayf*, literally

"without how"). The strength of Ibn-Ḥanbal's feelings on this matter may be gauged by the fact that he broke off relations with a follower who attempted to refute the Mu`tazilites by their own methods of argument."[865] This helps to show that, "the Hanbalites position was based on an awareness of the limitations of reason in this sphere, coupled with an understanding of the need to retain the concrete and "poetical" language of the Qur'ān and the Traditions."[866] In the words of Armstrong, Ibn Ḥanbal was not anthropomorphist but was "stressing the essential ineffability of the divine, which lay beyond the reach of all logic and conceptual analysis."[867]

Consequently, it can certainly be claimed that the *Salafs'* insistence upon an understanding and acceptance of these Qur'ānic expressions *without how* was neither literal nor anthropomorphic. They just did not want to traverse or trespass the area specified for the Divine. That is why they confined themselves to what they believed as the revelation along with an absolute denial of any similarity or resemblance between the God and the creatures. Al-Shahrastānī reports, that one of the reasons the *'Salaf'* refrained from *al-ta'wīl* (metaphorical interpretation) was, that an interpretation is "an opinion, and it is not lawful to give an opinion about the attributes of God; for we may sometimes interpret the verse in a way not intended by God, and thus we would fall into perversity."[868]

One should differentiate between the two later understandings of "*Salaf's*" position. A group of Sunnite scholars, mostly Ḥanbalites, took it to mean that these ambiguous verses should be understood in the light of the fixed rules of the language. The phrases like 'face of God' or 'hands of God' should be understood in accordance with their common, daily, linguistic usages. So, the term 'face of God' means face of God as we understand the meaning of the word 'face' in our daily usage without giving it a metaphorical interpretation. Such an understanding of these Qur'ānic expressions, to this group of scholars, does not imply any comparison, corporeality, or anthropomorphism, as the level of these attributes in God is absolute while in the creation it is relative. God has already explained that none is like unto Him, but He is at the same time hearing and seeing. So if the acceptance of His attributes like hearing and seeing and many others, that are also shared by human beings, does not make Him similar to man, likewise acceptance of attributes like hand and face would not be anthropomorphic. They are also different from human hands and faces.[869] Therefore, when we say 'God has a face or hands', it must be qualified with the qualifier "*not like our face or hands*" and *without how*. This is the position of Ibn Qudāmah (d.620/1223),[870] Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328),[871] and many other traditional scholars. They are followed in that by the "*Salafi*" groups of modern times such as the followers of Muḥammad b. `Abd al-Wahhāb (1115-1201/1703-1787)[872] who closely follow Ibn Taymiyyah's approach regarding the divine attributes.[873]

In his discussion of God's attributes, Ibn Taymiyyah "attempts to give greater depth of explanation to the traditionalist view of the nature of God. His main tool for this is the Arabic language. He sees Arabic as the unique vehicle of revelation, and thus all of its nuances must be understand properly and clearly. In addition to the Arabic language itself, one must read and understand the verses of the Qur'ān within their natural setting, i.e., the Qur'ān must be interpreted by the Qur'ān. The examples, parables and linguistic usages of the Qur'ān must be analyzed for their rules and principles, which in turn must be applied in a consistent and uniform manner. In this way, Ibn Taymiyyah does not reject the rational faculties of the mind (`*aql*), but

uses them in submission to revelation in order to explain revelation."[874] All this emphasis upon the linguistic meanings of the Qur'ānic verses, argues Watt, "grew out of a realization that the concrete, "poetical" language of the Qur'ān kept men closer to the deep springs of religious vitality than the abstractions of philosophical thinking."[875]

Ibn Taymiyyah argued, that *Salaf's* attitude towards Names and Attributes of God was to "attest and confirm whatever has been affirmed by God for Himself in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of His Prophet, without alteration (*taḥrīf*) or suspension (*ta`ṭīl* i.e., stripping God of those attributes) and without how (*takyīf*), or comparison (*tamthīl*)."[876] He argued that the words God has used for Himself in the Qur'ān or that His Prophet has used to denote Him, are realities carrying real meanings appropriate to the Exalted Majesty of God. The meanings of these terms when used of God, carry different realities than the meanings and the corresponding realities they describe while used in the human context or sphere. Though the terms are the same, but the corresponding realities are utterly different in accordance with the nature and essence of the two parties denoted and described by them. God is hearing, seeing, living, and some of His creatures are also hearing, seeing, and living. Such a concord of names does not "require resemblance of the Creator with the creation, but only denotes a kind of commonality or shared value between the both. The distinctive factors distinguishing one [God] from the other [creature] utterly outweigh and outnumber the factors common between them."[877] God was hearing and living long before creatures' existence and He will be so eternally; therefore, these names and qualities were "realities about God without any of the creatures having any share of them, and without any doubt of resemblance or comparability."[878] Hence accepting the reality of these Qur'ānic names, phrases, and attributes *vis a vis* God, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, is not any corporeality, anthropomorphism, or resemblance between God and creatures as they denote realities utterly different and extremely disparate between God and His creation.[879] The only condition that such an ascription can be allowed is, that the names and the attributes so ascribed must be appropriate to the Divine Exalted Majesty and must have the stamp of revelation. Even then no body will be able to know the reality or how of these attributes.

To Ibn Taymiyyah, any meaning other than the literal meanings of these phrases was alteration or *taḥrīf*; therefore, he vehemently opposed *'al-ta'wīl'*, the method of metaphorical interpretation. For instance, according to Ibn Taymiyyah the phrase *"yad"*, cannot be interpreted as power or bounty because the power of God is one and cannot be denoted with a dual noun as the Qur'ān does regarding the phrase *"yad"*.[880] Likewise the bounties of God are many; therefore cannot be denoted by a dual noun *"yadān or yadāhu"* as the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth do regarding the two hands of Go. The Qur'ānic phrase *"istawā `alā al-`Arsh"*, meant to Ibn Taymiyyah as "establishing Himself over and above the Throne".[881] "Although God's *'istawā `alā `Arshih'* is so real as the reality of a man's [servant] *istawā* upon and over the boat, the *istawā* of the Creator is not like the *istawā* of the creatures. God does not depend upon or need any thing; He is free from need of all the things [Self-sufficient]... If somebody argues that the acceptance of the reality of God's *istawā* necessitates that it be like the *istawā* of a man upon the boat, then let him claim that to accept the reality of God's knowledge, hearing, seeing, and speaking necessitates that such divine qualities be like [or resemble] the qualities of knowledge, hearing, seeing, and speaking among the creatures!"[882] Ibn Taymiyyah further argued, that establishing upon the Throne did not require God to touch the Throne etc. because He was not a body to occupy space. "His establishing

Himself over the Throne is confirmed by the revelation, while His exaltedness, highness, and otherness than everything other than Himself is confirmed by the logic (*al-`aql*) as well as the revelation... All the arguments brought by the deniers... would attend to if God were a body occupying space. But if He were above and over the Throne, and not a body or a space occupant, then none of these exigencies and anthropomorphic requirements or implications would come into effect."[883] Ibn Taymiyyah insisted to confirm the revelation without falling a prey to anthropomorphism or comparability. Moreover, he, like many others,[884] declared the metaphorical meanings of the term *'istawā'* such as "*istīlā*" meaning "appropriation, seizure, or taking possession", as tantamount to changing the intended meaning of the revelation. To say that God did not have hands or face was *ta`ṭīl,* and to compare the divine hands or face with human beings or with any other of God's creatures was *tamthīl.*[885] Ibn Taymiyyah argued, that the first part of Qur'ānic verse, "There is nothing like unto Him", negates anthropomorphism and comparison; while the second part, "And He is the One that hears and sees" (42:11), was negation of heresy and suspension of the attributes.[886] He further argued that the *'Salaf'* following the Qur'ānic model "confirmed the attributes in details, but confined themselves to a wholesale and comprehensive negation of the likes of anthropomorphism and comparison that are not appropriate to be attributed to God Almighty."[887] In Ibn Taymiyyah's opinion, *'the Salaf'* believed in the commonly accepted meanings of these Qur'ānic terms the way it was appropriate to the exalted majesty of God. Those meanings were absolutely different from the corresponding realities of these terms in the creatures.[888]

In spite of all efforts on the part of Ibn Taymiyyah to avoid resemblance between God and the creatures, and his genuine belief that God is not a corporeal or anthropomorphic being, his insisting to maintain the literal meanings of the above discussed phrases may leave tinges of anthropomorphism in minds of the simple minded fanatics. If the terms, when used of God, do not denote the realities they denote in their usual set up, then there is no need to insist upon their literal sense. The language, to use Netton's term, "is ruptured."[889] Whether one calls it literalism or metaphorical, it is a rupture of the language. Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah's such an insistence upon the commonly used literal meanings of the seemingly anthropomorphic Qur'ānic expressions gave birth to certain suspicions and stories about him. In explaining the report of God's descent in the later part of the night, he is reported to supposedly have said: "God comes down from heaven to earth, just as I am coming down now," and he came down one of the steps of the pulpit staircase."[890] The same charges of corporealism are leveled against another Ḥanbalite, Abū `Āmir al-Qarashī. He is reported to have supposedly pointed to his leg saying "it is exactly the same as this [leg]" when explaining the verse 42 of the Qur'ānic chapter 68.[891] In view of such reports, al-Nashshār,[892] Madkūr, and Goldziher[893] accuse Ibn Taymiyyah of anthropomorphism and corporealism. Gibb and Kramers observe: "An inveterate anthropomorphist, Ibn Taymiyyah interpreted literally all the passages in the Kur'an and tradition referring to the Deity. He was so imbued with this belief that, according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, he said one day from the pulpit in the mosque of Damascus: "God comes down from heaven to earth, just as I am coming down now", and he came down one of the steps of the pulpit staircase."[894] As a result, Gibb counts Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Ibn Hadjar al-Haitamī, Takī al-Dīn al-Subkī, and Abū Ḥaiyān al-Ẓāhirī among those who do not "agree on the orthodoxy of Ibn Taymiyyah."[895] Muḥammad `Abduh, on the other hand, doubts the authenticity of the reports regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's anthropomorphism.[896] Rāghib al-Tabbākh, Muḥammad Bahjah al-Bayṭār, and Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī reject the reports as mere

fabrications and absurdities.[897] They, like S. Mukhtār, defend Ibn Taymiyyah against all accusations of anthropomorphism and corporealism.[898] Gibb observes: "However, those who praise are perhaps more numerous than his detractors..."[899]

It must be said that Ibn Taymiyyah, at least from his own writings, does not seem to be an anthropomorphist or corporealist. He ceaselessly emphasizes the dissimilarity between God's attributes and man's attributes, and denounces all sorts of resemblance between God and any of His creatures.[900] He argues, that "the statement about God's attributes is just like the statement about His essence (*Dhāt*). There is absolutely none like unto Him either in His essence, or attributes, or actions... The knowledge of God, His coming down, and establishing Himself over the Throne, all [of these attributes and actions] are in a fashion appropriate to His essence, as the attributes of a servant [man] are suitable to him and appropriate to his human essence..; therefore, if anybody asks how God descends, or establishes Himself, knows, talks, measures, or creates, he should be replied: 'how is He in His being [essence]?' If the answer to this question is that, 'I do not know how of His being', then you should say: 'I do not know how of His attributes. The knowledge of the how (*kayf*) of the attributes follows the knowledge of the how (*kayf*) of the one they are attributed to."[901] Ibn Taymiyyah further argues, that "the attributes of God are indeed different from and superior to the attributes of the creatures. Nobody knows the difference and the level of superiority except God Himself."[902] Even in explaining the reports of coming down of God in the later part of the night, he clearly pinpoints that His coming down does not consist of any movement or change of position that would make the Throne above God. God is far beyond such creaturely attributes or propositions.[903] He also argues that "God descends to the heaven of the earth without the Throne being devoid of Him."[904] In short, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, God is God and not a creature. There is nothing like unto Him.[905] Ibn Taymiyyah literally accepts the reported attributes of God such as face, hand, coming down etc., but in a sense appropriate to His Exalted Majesty. The nature of which nobody knows. That is why many scholars have refuted accusations of anthropomorphism leveled against Ibn Taymiyyah and taken him as the competent religious authority and a model to be followed in matters of faith and religion. His students like Ibn al-Qayyam al-Jawziyyah (1292/1350) and scholars like al-Dhahabī, Ibn Qudāmah, Ibn al-Wardī and `Alī al-Qārī are just a few examples of such a tendency.[906] Ibn al-Qayyam, for instance, followed his teacher literally in regards to the above discussed expressions of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*.[907] Undoubtedly, observes Watt, "both by transmitting the works of the master and publicizing his ideas in a faultless style in his own works, he did much to spread and perpetuate the influence of Ibn-Taymiyya."[908] Many other Hanbalites did the same regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's teachings.

In spite of its close affinity with the Qur'ānic phrases and claims to follow Ibn Ḥanbal, the previously discussed literal position of many Ḥanbalites was severely attacked by other Muslim scholars. They dubbed it as Ḥashwiyyah in the garbs of "*bilkafa*".[909] Ibn Ḥazm declared the literal position to be "an opening to the road ending in anthropomorphism."[910] The same was said about the other Hanbalites such as `Alī b. `Ubaydullah al-Zāghūnī, al-Qāḍī Abū Ya`lā, Abū `Āmir al-Qarashī, who followed such a literal route regarding the Qur'ānic poetical expressions.[911] Contrary to that, Ibn al-Jawzī al-Ḥanbalī and Ibn `Aqīl[912] vehemently opposed such a literalism and seemed to have inclined towards a sort of rationalism closer to that of the Ash`arites as will be discussed later in the chapter. They forbade discussions of ambiguous verses and encouraged

to accept them without anthropomorphism or allegory.[913] Ibn al-Jawzī claimed to have written his treatise against those who "have fallen in the traps of anthropomorphism, but scorn its attribution to them. They claim to be from Sunnites but their statements are clear-cut anthropomorphisms."[914]

The second group of scholars argues that the "*Salaf's*" true position is not that of ascribing face or hands to God in their literal meanings *bila kayf*. The "*Salaf's*" true position is "*al-Tafwīḍ*". The *Tafwīḍ* means to accept the Qur'ānic phrases without anthropomorphism, corporealism, or further inquiry into their meanings or realities, and to entrust the true knowledge of the same to God Himself. Al-Bayhaqī reports Sufyān b. `Uyaynah saying, "Whatever expressions God has employed in the Qur'ān to describe His attributes, their elucidation (*tafsīr*) is their reading. It is not permissible for anybody to explain them either in the Arabic or in the Persian language."[915] Ibn Ḥanbal is reported to have said, "We believe in these expressions and affirm them without how and without [further inquiry] into their meanings (*wa lā kayf wa lā ma`na*)." According to this understanding of the *Salaf*, the Qur'ānic expressions such as 'God's hands' or 'face' do not carry the literal meanings like their counterparts in human beings. They mean face or hands, not organs but attributes or qualities of God; unlike our face or hands. No body knows the details or how of these divine qualities as no body knows the essence of God's being. According to this group, the *Salaf* acknowledged their sheer ignorance regarding the divine realms, entrusting the true knowledge of the meanings of these terms to God. Al-Rāzī, al-Shahrastānī, al-Ghazālī, `Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and M. Zāhid al-Kawtharī are just a few examples among many others who interpret the standpoint of the *Salaf* in terms of *al-Tafwīḍ*. Abū al-Ḥasan `Alī al-Ash`arī' (according to one dominant opinion about him), Abū Manṣūr al-Maturīdī (d. 331 A.H.) and al-Bāqillānī's (d. 403 A.H.)[916] position regarding such Qur'ānic expressions are quoted as examples of this line of the *Salaf's* approach.[917] For instance al-Rāzī observes, that the *Salaf's* attitude to these ambiguous Qur'ānic expressions was to "accept them without their literal meanings and to entrust the knowledge of their true meanings to God. Indulgence in their explanation (*tafsīr*) is not permissible."[918]

Al-Ash`arī (873-935) studied Mu`tazilites doctrines with al-Jubbā'ī, the head of Basrian school of Mu`tazila, and converted to Sunnism or traditionalism as a result of a dream.[919] Watt observes, that al-Ash`arī "worked out his new theological position which may be described as the support of revelation by reason. This implies of course a subordination of reason."[920] In his early work "*al-Ibānah*", al-Asha`rī declares to follow the footsteps of "Abū `Abdullah Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal."[921] In this work, he sticks to the theological positions of Ibn Ḥanbal so much so that, to Wensinck and Goldziher, he seems to be "the spiritual son of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal."[922] In his later works like *Maqālāt* and *al-Lum`a,* al-Asha`rī seems to be inclined more towards rational interpretations in support of revelation although Goldziher suspects his rationalism.[923] Watt observes, that "The reader who now turns to translations of the works of al-Asha`rī may at first find it difficult to discern any traces of "rational method" in them. They mostly consist of arguments from Qur'ānic verses and Traditions. Yet even here a knowledge of the writings of men in the strict Ḥanbalite tradition shows that al-Asha`rī really argues about these matters to a far greater extent. In addition other arguments are based on points of observation or of common knowledge, or on what the Muslims are agreed upon. Despite appearances, then, al-Ash`arī really introduced rational arguments; and this little piece of leaven quickly spread through the lump of Islamic

theology."[924] Al-Shahrastānī reports, that al-Ash`arī "follows the early community in not attempting to interpret them [verses and aḥādīth], though according to one opinion reported of him he allows interpretation."[925]

Al-Ash`arī attempted to take a middle position between the anthropomorphic literalism and Mu`tazilite's neutralism, although Goldziher does not agree to label al-Ash`ari's position as "conciliatory".[926] Al-Ash`arī argued that "God is knowing with knowledge, powerful with power, living with life, willing with will, speaking with speech... These attributes...are eternal and subsist in the essence of God. It cannot be said that they are he or other than he; nor can it be said that they are not he, nor that they are not other than he."[927] In his *Ibānah,* he dealt with the issue of anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān and Sunnah at length. There, he literally and faithfully followed the pattern set by the "*Salaf*". He argued that God has face, two eyes, two hands etc., but these are "two hands not like hands."[928] He affirmed the reality[929] of these attributes with the emphasis upon their dissimilarity with the creatures and accepting them without how.[930] Watt observed, that al-Ash`arī' "insisted that such Qur'ānic phrases must simply be accepted "without specifying how."[931] Wensinck argued that "al-Ash`arī in his *Ibānah* "produces arguments in favour of the view that Allah has a face and two hands, knowledge, power and speech. In all this there is scarcely a word that could not have been written by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal."[932] Goldziher observes, that "Indeed, when he comes to speak of the anthropomorphist question, he heaps all his scorn on the rationalists who seek figurative explanations for the concrete terms of the holy scriptures. Not satisfied with the rigor of the orthodox theologian, he also shows himself a grammarian. God Himself says, after all, that He revealed the Qur'ān in "clear Arabic"; it follows that the Qur'ān can only be understood in the light of correct Arabic usage. But when in the world had any Arab ever used the wórd "hand" to mean "benevolence," and so on? What Arab has ever employed all those tricks of language that rationalist interpreters want to read into the clear text in order to despoil the idea of God of all content?"[933] Goldziher further argues, that "To escape crass anthropomorphism, he does, to be sure, insert into his creed the clause that by face, hand, foot, and so on, we are not to understand members of a human body, that all this is to be understood *bilā kayfa, without* asking how... But to add this clause is not to be mediate; for traditional orthodoxy had held the same view. This was no mediation between Ibn Ḥanbal and the Mu`tazila; this was-as we could see from al-Ash`arī's prefatory declaration-the Mu`tazilite renegade's unconditional surrender to the standpoint of the traditionalists' inflexible *imām* and his followers. By his far-reaching concessions to popular belief, al-Ash`arī caused the loss to the Muslims of important Mu`tazilite achievements."[934] This close similarity and affinity with Ibn Ḥanbal has led many scholars (who believe that Ibn Ḥanbal was a literalist) to believe that al-Ash`arī took these anthropomorphic expressions and phrases literally.[935] Ibn Taymiyyah argues that it was definitely so.[936] M. Zāhid al-Kawtharī vehemently opposes such an interpretation of al-Ash`arī. He argues that al-Ash`arī never took these expressions literally and never said that God has two hands, two eyes etc. All the words denoting such anthropomorphic implications were later inventions and insertions thrusted into his books.[937]

Abū al-Mā`alī b. `Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, Imām al-Ḥaramayn, argues that al-Ash`arī "admits the existence of the divine qualities with the qualification of *tanzīh*: "Knowledge, but not like human knowledge... Hand and face are hand as a quality and face as a quality, just as hearing and sight.

Concerning Allāh's descending to the lowest Heaven, al-Ash`arī said that descending is a quality; likewise His sitting on the throne is a quality."[938] Al-Shahrastānī reports, that al-Ash`arī "maintains that hearing and seeing are two eternal attributes of God. They are perceptions beyond knowledge, connected with their proper objects provided they exist. He holds also that hands and face are attributes that are reported of God; for, as he explains, revelation speaks of them, and, therefore, they must be accepted as they are revealed. He follows the early community in not attempting to interpret them, though according to one opinion reported of him he allows interpretation."[939] M. Zāhid al-Kawtharī argues, that al-Ash`arī's "*Ibānah*" is according to the way of "*Salaf*" which was '*Tafwīḍ*' entrusting God with the meaning and "abstinence from fixation and specification of the intended meaning."[940] Therefore, al-Ash`arī, in Armstrong's opinion, was different in that he "opposed the literalists by pointing out that the Koran insisted that we could talk about God only in symbolic language. But he also opposed the Traditionist wholesale rejection of reason. He argued that Muhammad had not encountered these problems or he would have given the Muslims guidance; as it was, all Muslims had a duty to use such interpretive tools as analogy (*qiyas*) to retain a truly religious concept of God."[941] Unlike the Traditionalist, argues Watt, "a thinker like al-Ash`arī who admitted a proper theological use of reason could not rest content in the acceptance of this disharmony in our theological conceptions. He, himself, though admitting *balkayfiyya*, never, as far as I am aware, went so far as Ibn Qutaybah in emphasizing the disharmony of the Scriptural conceptions; and the development of doctrine among his followers was largely guided by the ideal of finding harmony and system in the main conceptions of Scripture."[942] Therefore, argues Armstrong, "Unlike Ibn Ḥanbal, Al-Ash`arī was prepared to ask questions and to explore these metaphysical problems, even though ultimately he concluded that it was wrong to try to contain the mysterious and ineffable reality that we call God in tidy, rationalistic system."[943] Wensinck also observes that "he adopted *kalām* as a method is certain."[944]

It must be added that al-Asha`rī, at least from his writings available to us, seems very close to the position of taking these terms literally without how and not metaphorically. He refutes metaphorical interpretations of the terms like "*yad*" and "*wajh*"[945] and confirms "two hands of God in reality (*fī al-ḥaqīqah*)."[946] Rippin observes: "God's attributes are real for al-Ash`ri because the Qur'ān clearly states them and so it must be meaningful to speak of God's hand and God's face; de-anthropomorphization was one of the central elements of Mu`tazilites' thought which al-Ash`ari denounced, for he saw it as a symbol of rationalist excess and willful ignorance of the sense of the Qur'ānic text. Still, he did not wish to deny that reason indicates that speaking of these attributes of God would seem problematic when put in conjunction with an infinite God. His solution was to speak of the reality of the attributes but that these are not attributes in the same way that humans have such: God does have a hand, but we just `do not know how' this is to be conceived. The phrase *bila kayf*, 'without knowing how', became a key term in Ash`arite theology, to be used whenever reason and the Qur'ān or *hadith* met head-on in conflict."[947] On the other hand, al-Asha`rī's somewhat deductive theological style differs to certain degrees from the traditionalist's style. His usage of the terms such as "hands not like hands" and some reports about him that he allowed metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), like the report of al-Shahrastānī quoted above, all these factors combined, may seem to make him appear to be what the later *Ashā`irah* made out of him. Otherwise, as far as his own writings are concerned, he is close to maintaining a literal understanding of these problematic expressions with the formula of *bilā kayf* although he does not seem to push the literal meanings that far as is the case with Ibn Khuzaymah or Ibn

Taymiyyah. In other words, a language rupture much more dense and intense can be granted to al-Asha`rī than its intensity in the traditionalists like Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Taymiyyah. Such a credit can be granted solely due to his background, training, and usage of the Kalām methodology and style, and not because of the vocabulary employed in his books to explain the above mentioned Qur'ānic and *Ḥadīth* expressions..

George C. Anawati observes that regarding the Qur'ānic anthropomorphism, "al-Bāqillānī remains very close to al-Ash`arī': he affirms that God really has a face, and hands, that he is really on his throne. He refuses to interpret these expressions either in a realistic fashion (like the Ḥanābilah) or in an allegorical fashion (like the Mu`tazilah). Similarly, for the "vision of God" (pp. 226-279), al-Bāqillānī insists on God's transcendence: there is no possible explanation for the way that vision will take place any more than there is for the way that divine speech is to be understood."[948] Al-Bāqillanī argues, that God's attributes such as hand and face mentioned in the ambiguous Qur'ānic verses must not be taken literally in their commonly used realities. The eternal God cannot be assigned or described in attributes of the contingent creatures; therefore attributing to Him "transmutation, movement, staying at a place, standing, and sitting is not permitted as He has said in the Qur'ān that "There is none like unto Him" (42:11; 112:4). Such attributes marking contingency and God transcends such attributes."[949] To him, God's "*istawā `alā al-`Arash*" means "neither establishment upon the Throne nor any direction... because the Throne is contingent."[950] It does not mean "tengency or manner or mode or proximity because He is God in heavens as much as He is God on the earth."[951] God is eternal and everlasting while the Throne is not. Likewise God's hands are not "two hands i.e., organs and do not have any form, shape or appearance..."[952] The same is the case with the rest of Qur'ānic expressions, but we do not know how of them.[953]

The third group, the "*Khalaf* or successors", most of them Ash`arīs, starting with Ibn al-Forak al-Aṣfahānī (d. 406 A.H.) and ending with al-Shahrastānī (d. 548 A.H.), argue that the metaphors are a reality recognized and used by the Qur'ān as well as the *Sunnah*. Moreover, there a consensus among all the mainstream Islamic scholars that the literal meanings of these phrases are not the intended meanings of the revelation because such meanings lead to anthropomorphism. Therefore a metaphorical interpretation of such Qur'ānic expressions substantiated by the fixed rules of the language and appropriate to the Exalted Majesty of God will be acceptable and immanent to avert the anthropomorphic implications.[954] Hence, the "*Khalaf* or successors" give metaphorical interpretations to these anthropomorphic phrases by deriving or substantiating such interpretations with the other Qur'ānic verses or with the help of ancient pre-Islamic Arabic poetry or prose. Within a century from the death of al-Ash`arī, observes Watt, "in 324/935 the school which took his name had abandoned the doctrine of *balkafiyya* on most of the points on which al-Ash`arī had contended for it and had adopted views similar to those of his opponents among the Mu`tazila."[955] Regarding the Divine Attributes, observes Gibb, "the scholastics maintained the doctrine of their eternity, but only by applying the Mu`tazilite principle of negation of anthropomorphic concepts."[956] Al-Baghdādī (d.429/1037),[957] al-Taftāzānī,[958] al-Juwaynī (d.478/1085),[959] al-Ghazālī (505/1111),[960] al-Shahrastānī (548/1153),[961] and al-Rāzī (606/1209)[962] are just a few examples of this tendency.

These Ash`arite theologians agree that "the hands of God mean His power, His eyes mean His seeing, and his face means His essence or existence; and [none of them take] the sitting on the throne literally or *bi-lā kayf*. On the other hand, they held that God would be seen by the faithful on the day of resurrection, even considering that they could give a rational proof of the possibility of God's being seen; this alleged proof presupposed, of course, that God was not corporeal."[963] They rendered all the divine attributes into major seven attributes i.e., Power, Knowledge, Live, Will, Listening and Seeing and the Speech.[964] These later Ash`arites in their rational or metaphorical interpretations of the Qur'ānic anthropomorphisms went closer to "Mu`tazilah even closer to philosophers", as Madkūr argues.[965] Watt observes, that the *Mawāqif* of al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) as commented by al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413),[966] "perhaps comes back closer to the al-`Ash`arī of the *Ibāna*, but definitely does not return to the doctrine of *balkafiyya*."[967] Ash`arism in its later manifestation along with its closest ally al-Māturīdiyyah is still dominant in most parts of the Islamic world. Like al-Ash`arī, observes Rippin, "al-Maturidi followed a middle path between Traditionalism and rationalism, forging an Islam which saw the written sources of the faith dominate but which found a place for the activities of the human mind."[968]

For instance, al-Ghazālī, the most known of the *khalaf*, divides people into two categories; the common people and the scholars (*`ulamā*). He advises the common folks not to engage themselves in interpretations of the ambiguous Qur'ānic expressions but "to eliminate from their belief system all that leads to anthropomorphism or contingency and to determine that God is such an existent there is none like unto Him and He is the hearing and the seeing. And if they happen to inquire about the meanings of the ambiguous Qur'ānic verses, they should be warned about doing so."[969] On the other hand, "it is appropriate for the scholars to know and understand such verses. I do not say it is incumbent upon each individual scholar to know the true meanings of these expressions. The knowledge of their true interpretations is not required, it is voluntary. The obligation is confined to declaring God's transcendence above all that has any comparison or similarity...We do not agree with those who claim that such verses are ambiguous (*al-mutashābihāt*) like the words at the beginning of some Qur'ānic chapters (*suwar*)."[970] To Ghazālī, the so-called anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* consist of the phrases commonly used and clearly understood by the Arabs unlike the one's at the beginning of certain chapters of the Qur'ān. Either these phrases carry literal meanings or they must be understood in their metaphorical set up and context. Now, all the parties agree that God is neither a body nor a contingent and that the literal meanings of these anthropomorphic phrases cannot be attributed to Him. Therefore there remains no choice but to accept the metaphorical meanings of such Qur'ānic phrases.[971] Al-Juwaynī, the teacher of Ghazālī, points to the contradiction between the conceptions that God is "with you whereinsoever you are" (57:4) and that "He established Himself upon the Throne" (57:4). He argues that if God is on the Throne He cannot be with all the human beings. From this contradiction, as Watt observes, "al-Juwaynī draws the conclusion that the method of *ta'wil* cannot be avoided in some cases, and in particular that God's presence with the believers must mean His knowledge of their secrets. In this he is assuming that there must be harmonious rational interpretation of the Scriptural phrases, and apparently his opponents were not capable of defending the opposite view."[972]

It is pertinent to mention here that the nature of these metaphorical interpretations is different from the allegorical interpretations discussed in the previous chapters *vis a vis* some Christian

sects. The metaphorical interpretations of the later Ash`arites differ from the Christian allegorism in terms of the Ash`arites following fixed rules of the language and a fixed number of the linguistic meanings of the terms to reach at most of their metaphorical interpretations. They employ one of the already existing linguistic meanings of the term as an appropriate or intended meaning without inventing some far fetched facts or supposition to say or prove what they want to prove from the text. Moreover, such a fixation is substantiated by the usage of the same meanings in established Arabic metaphors.[973] It may lead to a number of different yet mutually related interpretations as different scholars may emphasize different aspects or meanings out of the few commonly used meanings of the phrase. However it does not open the doors for a free style fanciful jungle of interpretations. Watt rightly observes, that "We must be careful, however, not to exaggerate the liberty in interpretation claimed by men like al-Juwaynī. The conceptions which they interpreted metaphorically were few in number, and even to these they applied the metaphorical interpretation only in order to bring them in harmony with principles which long discussion had convinced them were thoroughly in accordance with the sacred texts."[974] Therefore, we see a kind of consensus among most of the interpreters over the meanings of several of these problematic Qur'ānic expressions. On the other hand, the method of metaphorical interpretation or *ta'wil* in *Ashā`irah* was in contrast with other exponents of the method such as Mu`tazilah or Jahmiyyah in the sense that "It was not a rationalism in which reason was set above the revealed Scriptures, but one in which reason was assumed to be competent to understand and interpret the main truths contained in the Scriptures, and with these as basis to fathom the mystery of the Divine nature. That is to say, it was argued that, though the conceptions of religious intuition could not be reached by purely rational procedures yet, once they reached, they were thoroughly rational conceptions, forming harmonious system."[975]

In light of the above discussed tendencies among Muslim theologians, let us go back to the Qur'ānic verses and the *aḥādīth* themselves to see where they stand in terms of their anthropomorphism.

The word "*`Ayan*" literally meaning "eye" has occurred in a total of five Qur'ānic verses in connection with God. (1 time my eye 20:39; 4 times our eyes 11:37; 23:27; 52:48; 54:14) After conferring favors upon Moses, God reminds him of these bounties by the following words: "Behold! We sent to thy mother, by inspiration, the message: "Throw (the child) into the chest, and throw (the chest) into the river: The river will cast him up on the bank, and he will be taken up by one who is an enemy to Me and an enemy to him': but I endued thee with love from Me and (this) in order that thou mayest be reared *under Mine eye* (*wa li tuṣna`a `alā `aynī*). (20:39) God is reported to have commanded Noah to "construct an Ark under *Our eyes* and Our inspiration, and address Me no (further) on behalf of those who are in sin: for they are about to be overwhelmed (in the Flood)." (11:37 also 23:27) In 52:48 Muhammad is asked: "Now await in patience the command of thy Lord: for verily thou art in *Our eyes*" (or with Our eyes *bi 'a`yuninā* ), and in 54:14 Noah's Ark is reported to float under God's eyes. The very non-anthropomorphic, non-corporeal, and in a sense metaphorical nature of the expression "*`Ayan*" in the above Qur'ānic verses is evident from their context itself.[976] Al-Bayhaqī explains how the *aḥādīth* talking about the one-eye of Anti-Christ and God having not been one-eyed, emphasizes upon God's attribute of omniscience.[977] Ibn Ḥajar explains that in the above *Ḥadīth* the Prophet pointed to his eye not as a

symbol of God's "`Ayan" but as a symbol of Anti-Christ's eye.[978] Ibn Ḥazm argues that "it is not allowed for anybody to ascribe to God two eyes because the text does not prove so."[979]

The "*yad*" literally meaning "hand" has occurred in the Qur'ān a total of 9 times in regards to God Almighty. Out of these 9 verses the phrase "hand of Allāh" is conspicuous as it occurs in four verses. (3:73; 5:64; 48:10; 57:29) The non-anthropomorphic nature of this phrase becomes evident from its context. "Say: All bounties (the grace) are in the *hand of Allāh:* He granteth them to whom He pleaseth: and Allāh careth for all, and He knoweth all things." (3:73 also 57:29) In 5:64 His both hands are mentioned. It says: "The Jews say: "*Allāh's hand* is tied up," Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter. Nay, *both His hands* are widely outstretched: He giveth and spendeth (of His bounty) as He pleaseth." Except for the absolute literalist, the meanings of the phrase "both His hands," in the context it is used, seem to convey metaphorical meanings of the attribute of infinite generosity, giving, and grace to those who do good as well as to those who are evil.[980] At the occasion of Ḥudaybiyyah, and in connection with the *Bay'ah al-Riḍwān,* it says: "Verily those who plight their fealty to thee plight their fealty in truth to Allah: *The Hand of Allāh* is over their hands: then any one who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and any one who fulfills what he has covenanted with Allāh,-Allāh will soon grant him a great reward." (48:10) Here, emphasis upon the significance of their plight and help from God it seems is evident.[981] In 38:75 Allāh is reported to have said to Satan: "O Iblis! What prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I have created with *My hands*?" If taken literally, the passage seems quite anthropomorphic as the act of Adam's creation is connected directly with God's hands. This is the only place in the Qur'ān where the act of creation is connected with God's hands while at several other places the Qur'ān has connected the act directly to God Himself.[982] That is, perhaps, the reason that many scholars like Ibn Forak, Ibn al-`Arabī, al-Ghazālī and others have interpreted the phrase "with My hands" as meaning "with My power or authority or grace", i.e., without any father or mother or any other means.[983]

Al-Ash`arī argues against such metaphorical interpretation. He contends that "It is not permissible to say (two hands) mean two bounties as it is not allowed by the language itself that someone can say "I did with my both hands" intending my bounty." After refuting both the other meanings hands as well as power, he argues that the only remaining possibility is that "these mean two hands not like (creatures') hands excluding all the above three possibilities."[984] Even those like al-Ash`arī, al-Harwī, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyam, and al-Bayhaqī who avoid its interpretations as power or grace roundly reject the notion that it means hands as we understand the phrase in terms of human organ. They emphasize that two hands of God basically stand for the two divine attributes which were involved directly in Adam's creation with all the potentials God bestowed upon him. Therefore, to them, the above quoted verse signifies Adam's special honor, dignity and distinction and not God making him by touching or contacting directly his body.[985] Ibn Jawzī al-Ḥanbalī observes, that some people believe that God has hands and they "wrongly argue that God touches. They go that far as claiming that God touched with His hand the clay from which Adam was created... This is a slander and a white lie regarding God..."[986] The scholars who avoid interpretation of the term as *'power'* also see the same above mentioned meanings in the *aḥādīth* that indicate God creating the four things with His hand i.e., the throne, the Gardens of Eden, the Torah, and Adam.[987] The Qur'ān itself dispels anthropomorphic implications of this verse by

putting Jesus' virgin birth at par with Adam's creation: "The similitude of Jesus before Allāh is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be": and he was."[988] In the chapter of Mary the Qur'ān has clearly stated that the commandment "Be" was conveyed to Mary through the angel and not by any direct contact to or from God. (19:17-21; 3:45-47)

In addition to the mention of two hands, the Qur'ān uses the phrase right hand in connection with God. "No just estimate have they made of Allāh, such as is due to Him: on the Day of Judgment the whole of the earth will be His handful (*qabḍatuhū* meaning grip, hold, handful), and the heavens will be rolled up in *His right hand*: Glory to Him! High is He above the partners they attribute to Him!" (39:67)[989] Al-Alūsī and al-Bayhaqī have quoted several examples from the Arabic literature to show how *qabḍah* is used metaphorically for authority and *al-yamīn* for absolute power.[990] In several prophetic narration it has been claimed that both God's hands are right.[991] Al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Forak show how Arabs use the phrase right hand to express generosity and perfection. Therefore, the statement that "both God's hands are right", to them, denote His absoluteness and perfection."[992]

It is in the *Ḥadīth* literature that we find more daring expressions which, if taken absolutely literally, could definitely seem to depict God in some anthropomorphic terms.[993] For instance, God's fingers are mentioned: "Verily, the hearts of all the sons of Adam are between the *two fingers out of the fingers* of the Compassionate Lord as one heart. He turns them to any (direction) He likes. Then Allāh's Messenger said: O Allāh, the Turner of the hearts, turn our hearts to Thine obedience."[994] Ibn al-Athīr observes, that in this passage the fingers symbolize the swiftness with which God can transform and change the hearts.[995] Ibn Ḥāẓm observes, that fingers denote two of God's plans and bounties among countless divine plans and bounties.[996] Al-Nawawī observes, that such Prophetic narration must be understood in the light of the Qur'ānic verse "There is nothing like unto to Him". Secondly, it can be interpreted metaphorically in accordance with the rules and regulations of language. "When it is said "such and such is in my grip or in the palm of my hand" it does not mean that the person is literally in my palm or hand. It means I have power over him. In the same manner it is said "such and such is between my fingers I can change him the way I want to" it means that he is absolutely under my authority. Therefore the *ḥadīth* means that God has absolute authority upon the hearts of His servants and can change it whatever way He wants..."[997] There are other reports indicating that on the Day of Judgment "Allāh will put all the heavens on one finger, and the earths on one finger, and the trees on one finger, and the water and the dust on one finger, and all the other created beings on one finger. Then He will say, "I am the King."..."[998] Such reports could also be understood in the light of above interpretation.[999] Ibn Forak argues, that "the word "*al-aṣba`ah*" is linguistically used for several mutually related meanings... It is also used for the organ, but is not specified for that purpose only. Its usage can be as good for other meanings as is the case with organ. And we have already explained and proved that God cannot be ascribed members, organs or other corporeal attributes. Therefore, the meanings other than organ or member must be the right meanings."[1000] All of these expressions, to al-Ghazālī too, are not meant to be taken literally. They must be interpreted metaphorically to deny similarity or anthropomorphism.[1001]

God's foot is mentioned in the following Prophetic report: "Narrated Anas: The Prophet said, "The people will be thrown into the (Hell) Fire and it will say: "Are there any more (to come)?

(50:30) till Allāh puts *His foot* over it and it will say, *Qati*! *Qati*! (Enough! Enough!)"[1002] This text, observes Goldziher, "was troublesome for a refined conception of God. Such versatility of ingenious thought went into its interpretation that it represents a complete sampler of the hermeneutical arts cherished by the Ash`arite school."[1003] Al-Bayhaqī interprets it metaphorically by observing that putting the foot means a kind of reprimand to and pacification of the Hell Fire as is said "I put such and such under my foot" meaning control, pacification, and extinction.[1004] Al-Nawawī reports the interpretation of al-Naḍar b. Shamīl that *al-qadam* means *al-mutaqadim* [1005] meaning preceding i.e, those whom God knew by His eternal knowledge that they were the people of Hell Fire.[1006] Ibn Forak al-Iṣfahānī gives many more explanations to conclude that "no explanation whatsoever can be accepted which would ascribe to God of members, organs, parts of body or any other corporeal attributes."[1007] To Goldziher, on the other hand, such reports are evident examples of anthropomorphism and the above quoted interpretations are mere "sampler of exegetical violence."[1008]

The Qur'ān uses the term "side of Allāh" in a metaphorical sense when it says: "Turn ye to your Lord and submit to Him, before the Chastisement comes on you after that ye shall not be helped... Lest the soul should (then) say: `Ah! woe is me! in that I neglected *in the side of Allāh* (*janbillāh*) and I was but among those who mocked." (39:54-56) It seems clear that the phrase is not an anthropomorphic expression but stands, as argues al-Rāzī, for worship and obedience.[1009]

Coming of the Lord on the Day of Judgment is mentioned in the following verse: "Nay! When the earth is pounded to powder, and *thy Lord cometh,* and His angels, rank upon rank, and Hell, that Day, is brought, on that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?" (89:21-23) It also says: "Are they waiting to see if the angels come to them, *thy Lord*, or certain of the Signs of thy Lord! The day that certain of the Signs of thy Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe then..." (6:158) "Will they wait until *Allāh comes to them* in canopies of clouds and angels and the matter is settled? But to Allāh do all the matters go back (for decision)." (2:210) This coming of the Lord can be interpreted as coming of His command and order in the shape of punishment as can be substantiated from other verses of the Qur'ān where it specifically says: "Will they wait until angels come to them or the Command (*amr*) of thy Lord comes..." (16:33) [1010]

The famous saying of the Prophet that "Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes down (*yanzilu*) every night on the heaven of the world (*dunya* i.e first Sky) during the last third of the night and He say: (Is there anyone) who invokes Me, so that I may respond to his invocation? Is there anyone who asks Me, so that I may grant him his request? (Is there anyone) who seeks My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?"[1011] This report could also be interpreted as a metaphor as al-Ghazālī explains.[1012] To him, *al-nuzūl* in the sense of movement or declining of position is impossible in connection with God. Therefore, it means His kindness, mercy and readiness to listen to and respond to the supplications of those who call upon Him at the later part of the night.[1013] Badr al-Dīn al-`Aynī and Ibn Forak argue, that the word *nuzūl* in Arabic language is used in five different meanings. (1) change of location, position or station as in al-Qur'ān 25:48. (2) Notification, information, advice as in 26:193. (3) Statement, utterance, speech as in 6:93. (4) Attention or responsiveness to and interest in, and (5) Arrival of the verdict, judgment, decision etc. as is known from the common usage of the term. They further argūe that the readiness and

responsiveness of God to the people of earth could only be the logical interpretation as God is not a body that moves or changes locations.[1014] Gibb and Kramers also observe, that the report of "the nightly descent of God to earth, [is] in itself really soteriological and edifying, in which the exact point actually lies in the hearing of prayer."[1015] Goldziher, on the other hand, argues that "In this case the anthropomorphism was removed by means of a grammatical trick, made available by the nature of the old Arabic script, which does not contain any graphic expression of the vowels. Instead of *yanzilu*, "he descends," they read the factitive form *yunzilu*, "he causes to descend," namely, the angels. Thus the text's statement about God's change of place vanishes; it is not God who descends, but He causes angels to descend, who sound these calls in God's name."[1016] The same metaphorical interpretations of mercy, grace, and generosity could also explain the right meanings of the other Prophetic reports teaching that whosoever gets closer to God by span of a hand, God gets closer to him at arms length; and whosoever comes to Him walking, He comes to him jogging (quick pace).[1017]

Scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah, on the other hand, argue against such an interpretation of the report and contend that it is God Himself who descends to the heaven of the earth and not His command or mercy. One should not rush to depict Ibn Taymiyyah as an anthropomorphist just because he refutes the metaphorical interpretation of *al-nuzūl*. We know from his writings that he always claims to follow the "*Salaf*" and to confirm these attributes as he says, "without anthropomorphism (comparison), depiction (portrayal), alteration (distortion), and suspension"[1018] That is why we see him often modifying such reports with the qualifier that He descends in a mode appropriate to His Majesty. Scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah also argue against anthropomorphic understanding of such reports by contending that the mode of His despondence is absolutely different from the mode of His creatures.[1019] After discussing the meanings of "*al-ḥarakah,* meaning *movement*" in details and giving detailed account of its philosophical as well as scholarly definitions, Ibn Taymiyyah argues, that *'al-ḥarakah'* is not confined to the bodies only. He concludes that "the dictum to be definitely maintained is, that there is none whatsoever like Allāh in all what He has attributed to Himself. So whosoever describes to Him anything of the creatures' attributes or qualities in any of the things or aspects, is absolutely wrong. Such is the one who says that God comes down i.e, moves or transmutes as a man comes from the roof to the lower part of the house or like the one who says [He comes down] and the Throne becomes devoid of Him. This makes His coming down mean emptying a place and occupying another which is absolutely absurd. Such understanding must be denied of God..."[1020] He further argues that God is above everything. It does not mean that He is upon His Throne. It means that He is even above and over the Throne. Therefore, "the word *`al-nuzūl'* and likewise are definitely interpreted because there is nothing there from where His coming down can be imagined."[1021]

It becomes evident that Ibn Taymiyyah's insistence upon the literal meanings of these phrases is not due to corporealism or anthropomorphism. It is an insistence upon the superiority of revelation over logic and not the otherwise. He vehemently refutes the similarity or comparison between God and the creatures by overwhelmingly emphasizing that nobody knows the mode of coming or seeing or speaking of God as nobody knows the essence of God. Only one reality is known regarding God's *nuzūl* and other attributes and that is, that *all of them* are not anthropomorphic, but appropriate to the His exalted majesty.[1022] In the face of such an emphasis upon the impossibility of any comparison or resemblance between God and the creation, the

claims of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and accusations of corporealism leveled by al-Nashshār, Goldziher, and others against Ibn Taymiyyah seem to be biased.

That God has settled above His throne *(istawā 'alā al-'Arsh)* has occurred in the Qur'ān in seven verses. "Verily your Lord is Allāh, who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then He established Himself on the Throne. Regulating and governing all things..." (10:3; also see 7:54; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4; 57:4) This seemingly anthropomorphic expression of the Qur'ān has been the focus of many exegetical arguments and interpretations.[1023] All the mainstream scholars agree that *istawā* does not mean sitting or physically touching the Throne or in any other anthropomorphic or corporeal sense.[1024] Imām Mālik, representing the group known as "*Salaf*", argued that "*al-istawā* is not unknown and how is unintelligible. To believe in that is essential and the inquiry/question about it is innovation."[1025] Rabī'ah's reply to a question about the meaning of this Qur'ānic verse was: "How of that is unknown, and *al-istawā* is unintelligible, and it is essential for you and me to believe in it."[1026] This was the classical stance adopted by the "*Salaf*", as already discussed above, to maintain the superiority of revelation over reason and to maintain a sort of mystery and ineffability of God.[1027] Al-Ash'arī remained very close to this position. He argued that Mu'tazilite's interpretation of the word *istawā* as power and dominance does not go with the fact that God's power is extended to the whole world and His dominance to whole of the universe. But no one "from the Muslims allows to describe Him as dominant over weeds and cells. Therefore it is not permissible to say that *al-istawā* means *al-istīlā'* (dominance) over the Throne as that is the case with everything else. So it is essential to accept it as meaning *istawā* specifically connected with the Throne with the exception of all other things."[1028] It, to al-Ash'arī, means that God is even over and above His Throne which is the most magnificent and the highest of His creations. Many scholars like Mujāhid, Abū al-'Āliyah,[1029] and many others who followed "*Salaf*," took *istawā* to mean "raised above the Throne" and not settled upon the throne i.e., conveying any sense of sitting upon the Throne like bodies.[1030] Ibn Taymiyyah also argues that *istawā* does not in any way or form convey the sense of Him being sitting upon or touching the Throne. It conveys the attribute of "'*Uluww*" meaning highness and exaltedness over and above the Throne.[1031]

The later Ashā'irah, on the other hand, preferred metaphorical interpretations to avoid anthropomorphismic implications. For instance al-Ghazālī argues, that the literal meaning of the word *al-istawā* leads to corporealism which is denied by all the parties concerned; therefore it is not appropriate to be ascribed to God Almighty who is neither a body nor contingent.[1032] Leaving the word as it is may lead some people to confusion or anthropomorphism. Therefore, the metaphorical meaning "*al-istīla*' i.e., dominance" is the only logical interpretation.[1033] Al-Ghazālī even argues that Ibn Ḥanbal also knew that *al-istawā* did not mean establishing Himself upon the Throne and *al-nuzūl* did not mean coming down of God Himself, but he prohibited metaphorical interpretation so as not to open the door for exploitation of revelation and extremism.[1034] The metaphorical, non-corporeal nature of the phrase has become so common among the Muslims that a modern scholar, Muhammad 'Ali, is not hesitant to argue that "It is nowhere said in the Holy Qur'ān that God sits on 'Arsh; it is always His controlling power that is mentioned in connection therewith."[1035]

Finally, in the *ḥadīth* the Prophet said, "God created Adam in his form, his height being sixty ells."[1036] This report bears close resemblance with *Genesis* (1:26) if taken to mean that God created Adam in God's form. Ibn Qutaybah took it literally and argued that God has "form but not like forms."[1037] Such a literalism, in the opinion of Ibn Forak, leads to clear anthropomorphism which is contradictory to the Qur'ānic dictum that there is none like unto Him.[1038] To Ibn al-Jawzī al-Ḥanbalī such a literal interpretation is "repulsive and ugly."[1039] Such a literal interpretation was certainly not acceptable to many Muslims; therefore, as Badar al-Dīn al-`Aynī reported, it was interpreted as meaning that God created Adam "in Adam's form. This is a better and the appropriate interpretation. It means that God created Adam as a full fledge man with full creation having a length of sixty ells unlike others who are first just a sperm, then a clot... go through stages."[1040] Abū Manṣūr argued that in this report "the Prophet wanted to explain that Adam's form did not change as happened to the Serpent when expelled from the Paradise. He was created in his form which he had in the paradise without distortion or change in the creation."[1041] Ibn Forak has given a detailed account of all of these interpretations.[1042] Watt observes that "Indeed, it could be construed as the denial of various views that were actually held, or might be held, within the Islamic world. It was a denial that Adam was changed, like the serpent or peacock, when he was expelled from the Garden; it was a denial that he came into being through natural process, whether physical or embryological, and had to undergo development in order to reach maturity. It could even be regarded as a denial that the form or conception of humanity was a mere abstraction of the human intellect. For the exponents of these views and for the more intellectual Muslims this might be a satisfactory way of dealing with what they felt to be objectionable in the assertion that God created Adam in his image or form; but such subtleties of interpretation could hardly have appealed to the ordinary man."[1043] Goldziher argues that "these examples demonstrate the very frequently applied method of using grammatical alterations to obviate theological difficulty."[1044]

Other reports from the Prophet include "Do not say, May God make foul his face and a face like his, for God created Adam in his form" and one that says: "If you are beating anyone, avoid his face, for God created Adam in his form".[1045] These reports were interpreted also in such a manner so as to avoid anthropomorphic implications. Here the pronoun 'his' was told to naturally referring to the man cursed or beaten.[1046] Al-Ghazālī argued that 'his form' can be taken to mean God's form. There are a few reports that attribute the "form" to al-Raḥmān,[1047] although not all of them are accepted as authentic.[1048] But the form, to al- Ghazālī, was "not the external visible form, but "the 'inner form' (*ṣūra bāṭina*) belonging to the 'supernal world' (*`ālam al-malakūt*)..."[1049] He also argued that 'his form' meaning 'God's form' can be justified in two ways: "Firstly, if God's form means a form in God's possession, then man may be regarded as a microcosm, a universe in little; this is a favorite conception with al-Ghazālī. Secondly, if God's form means something characterizing him, then that might refer to the fact that just as God is living, knowing, willing, so man is living, knowing, willing; and the complex of these attributes might be held to constitute the `inner form'... when attributes are said to belong to god and also to man, the correspondence is only verbal, and similarly in saying that God has a form and man has a form the correspondence is only verbal. To suppose that God's form is external and visible would of course be anthropomorphism (*tasbīh*)."[1050]

This clear tendency against accepting anthropomorphic implications of the Prophetic reports such as discussed above, did not spring merely from the Muslim intellectualism. Such a tendency has its origin in the Qur'ān. Watt observes that "What seems to have turned the scale against acceptance of the conception of man in God's form is the way in which the word ṣūra and its cognates are used in the Qur'ān. There are two main points to be noticed. Firstly, God is referred to in the Qur'ān as *muṣawwir*, 'the form-giver', 'the one who forms'; and the activity of 'forming' is closely connected with that of creating, even of creating Adam in particular. Now, if creating and forming are similar or closely connected, the word 'form' would have the suggestion of something created and would therefore not be appropriate for God. Secondly, the word ṣūra or 'form' tends to connote something composite because the one verse of the Qur'ān where it is used runs: "in whatever form he willed he constituted thee' (or 'set thee together'). Though Westerners may consider form a principle of unity, the Arabs, perhaps under the influence of this verse, seem to have thought of ṣūra as something complex. In this way also it was inappropriate that God should have a ṣūra."[1051]

It is evident from the above discussions that the seemingly anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth have been a source of controversy among many Muslim scholars and sects. If accepted literally without proper qualifications, these expressions definitely lead to an anthropomorphic conception of God otherwise vehemently denied by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Therefore, two main tendencies have dominated the Muslims throughout their history of dogmatic development; either to accept them *bilā kayf* or to explain them with the help of genuinely accepted metaphors to avoid anthropomorphic implications. The first tendency, to `Abd al-Ḥalim Maḥmūd, is the true essence of Islam.[1052] Anthropomorphism seems to be the unacceptable, unlawful, and mostly denied thing among most of the Muslims. Figures like Ibn Taymiyyah also vigorously refute accusations of anthropomorphisms. Ibn Taymiyyah, who otherwise disagrees with later Ashā`irah in terms of their arguing that the "*Salaf*" did not maintain the literal, commonly used meanings of these phrases 'without how', however agrees with them to deny such literal meanings if they lead, in certain cases or to certain people, to anthropomorphism or corporeality. He allows such an interpretation only "if the forbidden [anthropomorphic] meanings become evident or common with some people..."[1053] Moreover, those extremists like Hishām b al-Ḥakam who otherwise are reported to have accepted these expressions literally and explained them corporeally, qualified their corporealism with phrases such as "not like bodies" or "things".[1054] Even their understanding of God in a sense can be interpreted as non-anthropomorphic because their concept of 'body' or 'thing' is somewhat different from the literal meanings of the terms and their usages in the human sphere. Al-Ash`arī has reported from Hishām and Wilfred Madelung has observed that Hishām b al-Ḥakam "and probably the doctrine of his school also defined God as a body, in the meaning that he is existent *(muwjūd)*."[1055] The reason for such an abhorance of anthropomorphism and corporealism is that the Qur'ān has always emphasized, and in no way using ambiguous terms, the transcendence and uniqueness of God as we have already seen in this chapter. Watt rightly observes that these issues introduce us "to one of the deep tensions in Islamic thought -the tension between those who held God's absolute otherness and those who believed that there was an affinity between God and man. This study has also shown us... that the steady pressure through the centuries of the Qur'ān had an important share in determining the final result."[1056]

We can conclude with Gibb and Kramers who observe: "Yet when Muhammad speaks of Allāh's two hands... or of his grasp... or of his eyes... or of his face... or describes him as settling himself upon his throne... we are not to regard that as due to an anthropomorphic theology but rather as the still plastic metaphor of a poet. To speak technically, we have here only *madjāz*; *tadjsīm* and *tashbīh* lay with the future exegetes. Similarly in the case of the metaphysics."[1057] Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the presence of such expressions in the scripture have been problematic to a certain degree, but mainstream Islam has always emphasized the unconditional transcendence of God, His uniqueness and otherness. Moreover, such a transcendence was not a bare unity or an abstract idea but a vivid, personal, and very loving God was reflected through and through so as to make it easy for the believers to reflect upon and relate to Him. Netton rightly observes, that "The God portrayed in the Qur'ān has both a transcendent and an immanent aspect. On the one hand 'like Him there is naught'; on the other hand, God announces in His revelation: 'We indeed created man; and We know what his soul whispers within him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."[1058] The immanent aspect, to me, was achieved by affirming the above discussed expressions and attributes of God with the formula of *bilā kayf* as al-Fārūqī argues, "once the lexicographic meaning of the predicate is acknowledged and understood and then denied, it acts as a springboard for the mind to create a new modality for the predication in question, other than the empirical. But now no new modality is possible. Therefore, the mind perceives the impossibility of empirical predication while the understanding is still anchored to the lexicographic meaning of the term." Al-Fārūqī continues: "The imagination is thus compelled to produce the needed modality once the denial of empirical prediction and transcendence both are upheld. In this suspense, an intuition of transcendence is obtained, not unlike that of infinity and sensory inexpressibility engendered by the arabesque. The lexicographic meaning of the term serves as anchor while the imagination soars in search of an applicable modality of the meaning in question, a modality that is impossible to reach. Indeed, the Qur'ān likens the word of God to "a tree whose roots are firm in the earth, and whose branches are infinite and unreachable in the skies above" (14:24)."[1059] Such a formula, according to Watt, was very much needed to maintain the divine mystery.[1060]

We may conclude the chapter with the claim that the Qur'ānic Creator Paradigm, to use Netton's phrase, does maintain a wonderful demarcation line between God and whatever is non-God by holding fast to the concept of His transcendence, uniqueness, and otherness. This concept is no bare unity or abstraction, but a vivid, alive, and demanding concept which makes God relevant to the 'here and now' by means of emphasizing His immanence through the modality it provides by the countless Qur'ānic verses. The modality and the language is essentially structured in such a way so as to allow many possibilities of communication without making God resemble or disappear in the world He has created. This type of transcendental concept is pervasive throughout the Qur'ān, the authentic Ḥadīth literature, and also throughout the history of Islamic civilization. All mainstream Muslim thinkers, even the philosophers to an extent, seem to follow the same line: the sense of and a belief in the transcendental Deity who is mysterious, ineffable, and unknowable in His essence, but at the same time very close to His creatures by dint of His knowledge, power, mercy, and love. Linguistically, observes Netton, "such philosophers' employment of certain kinds of vocabulary to denote the transcendent marked a movement away from the familiar, almost cosy, language of the Qur'ānic Creator Paradigm to shifting evanescent

area where language was often emptied of all normal meanings: the end result could be paradoxically and startlingly akin to that achieved by the theologies of al-Ash`arī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal..."[1061] This rupture of language, as seen above, was not meant for the "death of God", as Prof. Netton argues,[1062] but for quite the opposite reasons. It was meant to admit the inadequacy and imperfection of the human language, the ineffable mystery of God, and the utter human dependence upon Him and His revelation to achieve any authentic knowledge about His being.

[1] P. K. Hitti, The Arabs, A Short History, Regnery Gateway, Washington, D.C., 1993, 42

[2] James A. Michener, Islam - The Misunderstood Religion, In Reader's Digest, (American Edition), May, 1955

[3] S. Hossein Nasr, A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World, Kazi Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1994, 15

[4] `Adnān M. Zarzūr, `Ulūm-ul-Qur'ān, Al-Maktab-al- Islāmī, Beirut, 1984/1404 A.H., 45-46; M.M. Ali, Religion of Islam, S. Chand and Comp., New Delhi, n.d., 17; Mannā' -al-Qaṭṭān, Mabāhith fī `Ulūm-ul-Qur'ān, Maktabah Wahabah, Cairo, 1988/1408, 15-16; Ahmad von Denffer, Ulum al-Qur'ān, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'ān, The Islamic Foundation, Liecester, 1989

[5] Muḥammad b. Ya`qūb al-Fayroz Ābādī, al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ, ed. by Yūsuf al-Shaykh M. al-Baqā`ī, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1995/1415, 47; Ali, Ibid, 17; Zarzūr, Ibid; Richard C. Martine (Ed.), Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies, U of Arizona Press, Tuscan, 1985, 30-33

[6] See Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Rāzī, Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ, Dār al-Qalam, Beirut, 1979, 526; also see books of *tafsīr* for al-Qur'ān 75:17-18.

[7] Zarzūr, Ibid, 45; for more details see Arabic sources like Badar al-Dīn Al-Zarkashī, Al-Burhān fī `Ulūm-ul-Qur'ān, Dār al-Fikr, 3rd Ed., 1980; and Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Itqān fī `Ulūm-ul-Qur'ān, Halabī, Cairo, 1935/1354, for a recent edition see Ibid, Maktabah Nazzār M. al-Bāz, Riyadh, 1996/1418

[8] Zarzūr, Ibid 46, Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 16-17

[9] Ismā`īl R. Al-Fārūqī, Towards Islamic English, International Institute of Islamic Thought, Verginia, 1986/1406, 44

[10] H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, Oxford UP, London, 1972, 24

[11] I. R. Al-Fārūqī and Lois L. Al-Fārūqī, The Cultural Atlas of Islam, Macmillan, NY, 1986, 100; also see Sydney N. Fisher and William Ochsenwald, The Middle East, A History, McGraw-Hill, NY, 1990, 50; Hitti, Ibid, 43

[12] See H. Lammens, Islam, Beliefs and Institutions, Trans. by Sir E. D. Ross, Frank Cass, London, 1968, 41; Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 100; and Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 46-60

[13] Mustansir Mir, Coherence in the Qur'ān, American Trust Publication, IN, 1986/1406, 101, though efforts have been made by Western scholars to do so in the light of form-criticism. See Richrad Bell, The Qur'an: Translated With a Critical Rearrangement of the Surahs, UP, Edinburgh, 1938-39; see also his Introduction to the Qur'an, Edinburgh, 1953; also "The Style of the Quran", Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society, ii (1942-4), 9-15

[14] Al-Qur'ān, 29:50-51. The Qur'ān has expressed such a claim and a challenge at several places. In 17:88 it claims: "Say: "If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support." In 11:13 it challanges them to bring ten chapters like those of the Qur'ān: "Or they may say, "He forged it." Say: "Bring ye then ten Sūras forged, like unto it, and all (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than Allāh! If ye speak the truth! "If then they answer you not, know ye that this Revelation is sent down with the knowledge of Allāh, there is no god but He! Will ye even then submit (to Islam)." In 2:23-4, the challenge was reduced to one chapter: "And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produce a Sūra like thereunto; and call your witness or helpers (if there are any) besides Allāh, if you are truthful. But if you cannot- and of a surety ye cannot-then fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, which is prepared for those who reject those."

[15] M.Mir, Ibid, 10, also see for details Issa J. Boullata's "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Quran: i`jaz and Related Topics", in Andrew Rippin (Ed.), Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Quran, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, 139-157

[16] Helmut Gatje, The Quran and Its Exegesis, Trans. by A.T. Welch, U of California Press, Los Angles, 1976, 31

[17] Abū Uthmān Amr al-Jāḥiẓ (163-225/780-869), Abū `Ubaydah (208 A.H.), Abū `Abdallah Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Wāsiṭī (d. 309/919), Ibn al-Ikhshīd and Ibn Abī Dawūd (316 A.H.), Abū Īsā al-Rummānī (383), al-Khaṭṭābī (388), al-Bāqillānī (403), al-Jurjānī (471), al-Rāzī (606), Ibn Abī al-Aṣba`a (654), al-Zamlkānī (727), and al-Rāf`ī (1937) are a few examples.

[18] See details in Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāf`ī, 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān wa al-Balāghah al-Nabawiyyah, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, Beirut, 1990/1410, 93ff. Almost all sources on "Ulūm al-Qur'ān" treat these topics.

[19] See Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 250-263, Zarzūr, Ibid, 227-242, for a detailed study see Na`im al-Himsi, Tārikh fikrat i`jāz al-Qur'ān, Damascus, 1955 and `Abd al-Karim al-Khaṭib, I`jāz al-Qur'ān, 2 volums, Cairo, 1964, and for short account of the develoment of the idea of i`jaz see Gustave E. von Grunebaum's introduction to his A Tenth-Century Document of Arab Literary Theory and Criticism, Chicago, 1950, see also I.J. Boullata's article, "I`jāz", in Encyclopedia of Religion, Macmillan, NY, 1987

[20] Muḥammad Khalf Allāh and Muḥammad Zaghlul Sallām (Eds.), Thalath Rasāil fi I`jāz al-Qur'ān-li-Rummāni wal-Khaṭṭābi wa `Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjāni, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Egypt, 2nd ed., 1387/1968, 27

[21] Abū Bakr al-Baqillāni, I`jāz al-Qur'ān, ed. by M. A. Khifāji, Dār al-Jil, Beirut, 1991/1411, 120-158; I`jāz al-Qur'ān has also been edited by Aḥmad al-Ṣaqr, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, Egypt, 1374/1954. For al-Baqillāni's method of deducing Qura'nic i`jāz from his empirical, stylistic analysis of *naẓm* and it rhythm of *kalimāt* (structural rhetorical units) within the Qur'anic verses see Angelika Neuwirth, "Tariqat al-Baqillāni fi iẓhār i`jāz al-Qur'ān", in Wadād al-Qāḍi (ed.), Studia Arabica et Islamica, (Arabic Section), Beirut, 1981, 281-96

[22] Ibid, 159

[23] Ibid, 178

[24] See al-Jurjāni, Kitāb Dalā'l al-I`jāz, ed. by Maḥmūd M. Shākir, Maṭba`ah al-Madani, Cairo and Jeddah, 1992/1413, 43-370; Dalāil al-I`jāz has also been edited by Muḥammad `Abd al-Mun`im al-Khafji, Maktabat al-Qāhirah, Egypt, 1389/1969

[25] Ibid, 391

[26] Ibid, 392ff

[27] Introduction of Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. `Umar al-Zamakhshari to his al-Kashshāf `an ḥaqāi'q al-tanzil wa `Uyūn al-Aqāwil, 4 vols., Muṣṭafā al-Bābi Al-Ḥalabi, Cairo, 1385/1966, for studies on al-Zamakhshari and his Kashshāf see Muṣṭafā al-Ṣāwi al-Juwayni, Minhāj al-Zamakhshari fi tafsir al-Qur'ān wa bayān i`jāzih, Cairo, 1959 and Aḥmad al-Ḥūfi, Al-Zamakhshari, Cairo, 1966, and Darwish al-Jundi, al-Naẓm fi Kashshāf al-Zamakhshari, Cairo, 1969, for more information see Dionisius A. Agius, "Some Bio-bibliographical Notes on Abu'l Qasim Mahmud b. `Umar al-Zamakhshari", in Al-Arabiyya (Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic), 15, nos. 1-2 (1982), 108-30

[28] For more detailed accounts of the above discussed as well as other scholars views see al-Zarkashi, al-Burhān fi `Ulūm al-Qur'ān, chapter 2; M. Mir, Ibid, chapter 1

[29] Al-Rāf`i, 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān wa al-Balāghah al-Nabawiyyah, 227; also see his Tārikh Ādāb al-`Arab, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabi, Beirut, 1974/1394, 2, 212ff

[30] See his al-Taṣwir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'ān, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Cairo, 33ff; also his fi Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān, Dār al-Shurūq, Beirut, 1994/1415; also Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah; Bikry Shaikh Amin, al-Ta`bir al-Fanni fi al-Qur'ān, Dār al-Shurūq, Beirut, 1976

[31] See for instance R. L. Atkinson, R. C. Atkinson, E. E. Smith, D. J. Bem and E. R. Hilgard (eds.), Introduction to Psychology, Harourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, NY, London, 1990, 306ff; N. E. Spear, The Processing of Memories: Forgetting and Retention, Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., John Wiley & Sons, NY, London, 1978, chapter 2, 47ff; B. F. Skinner, The Technology of Teaching, Appleton-century-Crofts, NY, 1968

[32] A. Paivio, Imagery and Verbal Processes, Holt, rinehart & Winston, NY, 1971

[33] Al-Fārūqi, Ibid, 102, for Arabic source see `Abd al-Karim al-Khaṭib, I`jāz al- Qur'ān, 2nd. ed., Beirut, 1975, and `Ā'isha `Abd al-Raḥmān (Bint al-Shāṭi), al-I`jāz al-Bayāni, Cairo, 1971

[34] Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'an, Bibliotheca Islamica, Chicago, 1980, 104-105

[35] John L. Esposito, Islam The Straight Path, Oxford UP, NY, 1991, 21

[36] P.K. Hitti, The Arabs, A Short History, Regnery Gateway, Washington, D.C., 1993, 46

[37] Al-Fārūqi, Cultural Atlas, 104

[38] Ibid,

[39] Muḥammad `Abduh, The Theology of Unity, Trans. by Ishaq Musa`ad and Kenneth Cragg, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966, 119, also see page 121

[40] Gibb, Ibid, 28

[41] Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'an: i`jaz and Related Topics", in Andrew Rippin (Ed.), Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, 140-141. There were a few attempts made by some individuals to meet the Qur'ānic challenge but in vain. See al-Tabari, Annels, Brills, Leiden 1879-1901, i, 1933-4 and al-Baqillāni, I`jāz al-Qur'ān, 238-40, see also Ignaz

Goldziher, Muslim Studies, edited by S.M. Stern, London, 1971, 11, 363-5, see also Rudi Paret, "The Qur'an, I', in A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith (Eds.), Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, Cambridge, 1983, 212-13, also see Josef van Ess, "Some fragments of the Mu`āraḍāt al-Qur'ān attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa", in Wadād al-Qāḍī (Ed.), Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Ihsan `Abbas on his Sixtieth Birthday, Beirut, 1981, 151-63

[42] M. Khalīfa, The Sublime Qur'an and Orientalism, Longman, NY, 1983, 19

[43] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid

[44] Malik b. Nabī, The Qur'ānic Phenomenon, Trans. by Abu Bilal Kirkary, American Trust Publication, IN, 1983, 101-104

[45] See Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, Mabāḥith fī `Ulūm al-Qur'ān, Dār al-`Ilm li al-Malāyīn, Beirut, 1972; also Isaa. J. Boulatta, I`jaz and Related Topics

[46] Quoted by M. Khalifa, Ibid, 24-25, also see K. W. Morgan (ed.), Islam Interpreted by Muslims, Ronald Press, London, 1958, 21-35

[47] S. Hossein Nasr, A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World, Kazi publications, Inc., Chicago, 1994, 11

[48] See Muhammad `Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, 1968/1387, 1, 56-7; for more details Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfʻī, 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān wa al-Balāghah al-Nabawiyyah, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, Beirut, 1990/1410, 144ff

[49] See Zarzūr, Ibid, 232, Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 254, Boullata, Ibid, 141-142

[50] For al-Murtaḍā see al-Rāfʻī, 144f

[51] Ali Dashti, Twenty Three Years, A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad, Trans. by F.R.C. Bagley, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1985,48-49

[52] Al-Jurjānī's entire book is meant to prove the eloquence of the Qur'ān through its grammatical structures and meanings. Also see al-Rāfʻī, Ibid, 71ff; Abū Muḥammad `Abdullah b. Muslim b. Qutayba, Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur'ān, ed. by Aḥmad Ṣaqar, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1978; and his Ta'wīl Mushkal al-Qur'ān, ed. by Aḥmad Ṣaqar, Dār al-Turāth, Cairo, 1973; Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad Makkī al-Qaysiyy, al-`Umdah fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān, ed. by Yūsuf A. al-Mar`ashilī, M. al-Risālah, Beirut, 1981/1404. Most of the books on `Ulūm al-Qur'ān address the issue also.

[53] Ibid, 51

[54] Ibid, 52-53

[55] Ibid, 57

[56] See al-Qāḍī, al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-`Adl, Cairo, 1960, vol. 16, 323; and Muḥammad A. Khafājī's introduction to al-Bāqillānī's 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān, 20

[57] Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'ān, 105

[58] Armstrong, Muhammad, 11

[59] Quoted from Muhammad Husayn Haykal, The Life of Muhammad, Trans. by I.R. al-Faruqi, North Trust Publication, IN, 1976, XIIV, a classical example is Humphry Prideaux, The True Nature of Imposture, Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet, 7th ed., London, 1708

[60] See R.W. Sothern, Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages, Harvard UP, Mass., 1962, 28-32, 45ff; Benjamin Kedar, Crusade and Mission: European Approaches to the Muslims, UP, Princeton, 1984; Regine Pernoud, The Crusaders, Trans. by Enid Grant, Edinburgh, 1963, and Dufour, Philadelphia, 1964; also see Amin Maalouf, The Crusades Through Arab Eyes, Trans. by John Rothschild, Schocken Press, NY, 1985 and for a recent source see Terry Jones, Crusades, Facts in File, NY, 1995

[61] For details see Norman Daniel, Islam and the West: The Making of an Image, UP, Edinburgh, 1966, 34-39, see also Maxim Rodinson, "The Western Image and Western Studies of Islam", in Joseph Schacht and C.E. Bosworth (Eds.), The Legacy of Islam, Clarendon, Oxford, 1974, 9-62

[62] K. Armstrong, Muhammad, 26

[63] Quoted in E. W. Said, Orientalism: Westren Conceptions of the Orient, NY, 1985, 66; also see Armstrong, Ibid, 35

[64] Humphry Prideaux, Ibid, 80

[65] See for details Daniel, Islam and the West, 299-300; and Armstrong, Ibid, 37

[66] Quoted in N. Daniel, Islam and the West, 297

[67] Armstrong, Ibid, 38

[68] Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resortus and On Heroes and Hero-Worship, Introduction by W. H. Hudson, Everyman's Liberary, 1955, 289-90

[69] E. T. Renan, Studies in Religious History, History of the people of Israel and Religion of Antiquity, Metheson & Co., London, 132

[70] J. W. H. Stobart, Islam and Its Founder, SPCK Press, London, 1901, 231; for more Oriental's views about the Prophet of Islam see Afzalur Rahman (ed.), Encyclopaedia of Seerah, Vol. I, Book I, chapter 5, "Muhammad In The Eyes of The Non-Muslims", 183-192; also see Maxime Rodinson, "A Critical Survey of Modern Studies on Muhammad", in Merlin L. Swartz (ed.), Studies on Islam, OUP, NY, 1981, 23-85

[71] K. Armstrong, Muhammad, A Biography of the Prophet, Harper, San Francisco, 1992, 38

[72] Quoted from Gibb, Ibid, 25, for coherence in the Qur'an see M. Mir, Ibid

[73] Tor Andrae, Mohammad, The Man and His Faith, Trans. by Theophil Menzel, Books for Libraries Press, NY, 1971, 161

[74] E. Dermengham writes that "Voltaire, afterwards, amended in several places the hasty judgement expressed in his famous tragedy." Haykal, Ibid, xiiv, and for Carlyle's amendment see Gibb, Ibid, 25

[75] E. Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. by Dero E. Saunders, abridged in one volume, London, 1980, 657-8

[76] John E. Merril, "Dr. Bell's Critical Anaylysis of the Qur'an", Muslim World XXXVII (1947) 2:134-148, p:135

[77] E. Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Milman Co., London, n.d., vol: 1, 365, and Hartwig Hirschfeld, New Researches into Composition and Exegesis of the Quran, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1902, Asiatic Monograph, III, 5

[78] St. Clair-Tisdall, The Original Sources of the Quran, Sociey for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1905, 27, for more details see Anis A. Shorrosh, Islam Revealed, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1988, 191-221. On page 198 the heading reads "Mistakes in the Arabic of the Quran" and on page 199 it reads "Poor Grammer". It is interesting to note that Anis finds fault with the Arabic of the Qur'ān and doubts the grammatical structure of the Qur'ānic text while other learned Christian scholars like Hitti and H. Lammens have concluded that the Quran is the master piece of the Arabic language and the standard of the national grammer. Father Lammens, a devout Christian missionary about whom E. Dermengham writes: "Father Lammens, one of the most erudite of recent specialists, is unfortunately one of the most partial also." (Dermenghem, The Life of Mohamet, Trans. by A. Yorks, Dial Press, NY, n.d., p: x) Even a partial writer like Father Lammens observes that the Qur'ān "has served as the standard for fixing the rules of national grammer." (H. Lammens, Islam, Beliefs and Institutions, Trans. by Sir E. D. Ross, Cass and Co., London, 1968, 41). For Arabic sources about the issue see Abū Muḥammad `Abdullah b. Muslim b. Qutayba, Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur'ān, ed. by Aḥmad Ṣaqar, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1978; and his Ta'wīl Mushkal al-Qur'ān, ed. by Aḥmad Ṣaqar, Dār al-Turāth, Cairo, 1973; Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad Makkī al-Qaysiyy, al-`Umdah fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān, ed. by Yūsuf A. al-Mar`ashīlī, M. al-Risālah, Beirut, 1981/1404. Most of the books on `Ulūm al-Qur'ān address the issue also.

[79] Salomon Reinach Orpheus, A History of Religion, Livercraft Inc., NY, 1932, 176, and for a recent book see Robert Morey, The Islamic Invasion, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1992, 108-109, 114-115

[80] On the issue of Muhammad's sincerity see Marcus Dods, Mohammed, buddha and Christ, London, 1878, 21-22; Leitner's article on Islam in Religious Systems of the World, A Contribution to the Study of Comparative Religion, Swan Sonnenshein, London, 1905, 293; E. H. Palmer, The Koran, with an Introduction by R. A. Nickolson, Cambridge UP, 1954, 10; E. C. Hodgkin, The Arabs, Oxford UP, 1966, 27-28; John B. Glubb, The Life and Times of Muhammad, New York, 1971, 14; and Zafar Ali Qureshi, Prophet Muhammad and His Western Critics, Idara Ma'arif Islami, Mansoora, Lahore, Pakistan, 1992, II, 704-28

[81] See W.M. Watt, Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman, Oxford UP, London, 1961, 232

[82] Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, OUP, Karachi, 1979, 52

[83] Watt, What is Islam, Frederick Praeger Publishers, NY, 1968, 120

[84] Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, 1979, 53

[85] Watt, Ibid, 21

[86] See Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, Oxford at Clarendon Press, 1968, 80-85

[87] Ibid, 81

[88] Watt, Muhammad: Prophet and Stateman, OUP, Oxford, 1961, 15

[89] Watt, Bell's Introduction to the Quran, UP, Edinburgh, 1977, xi

[90] Ibid, 73
[91] Ibid, 22
[92] J. N. Anderson (ed.), The World Religions, Frank Cass, London, 1965, 56
[93] R. Bell, Introduction to the Qur'an, Edinburgh UP, Edinburgh, 1958, 70; also Watt, Bell's Introduction, 101 ff; for refutation of this hypothesis and others see S. Vahiuddin, "Richard Bell's Dating of the Qur'an, A Critical Analysis", in Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, Deccan, July 1956, Vol: XXXX, No. 3, 264. Vahiuddin writes: "Generally the European scholars, who have undertaken a critical scrutiny of the Qur'an, seem to believe in God and in the possibility of divine communication but seem to deny it in particular case of the Prophet of Islam. Their criticism then does not differ substantially in any way from that of sworn atheists and sceptics. They then try to understand the Qur'an by a phychological analysis of the Prophet's life, by the historical situation and social environment in which he grew. Mr. Bell, like those before him and after him, is of this way of thinking."
[94] Tor Andrae, Ibid, 161
[95] A.S. Tritton, Islam, Beliefs and Practices, Hutchinson University Library, London, 1966, 21
[96] Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, Hagarism, The Making of the Islamic World, Cambridge UP, London, 1977, 18; also see E. Palmer, The Koran, with an Introduction by R. Nicholson, Oxford UP, London, 1928; A. Jeffery, The Koran: Selected Suras Translated, Heritage Press, NY, 1958, 20; J. M. Rodwell, The Koran, London, 1909, 6
[97] Andrew Rippin, Muslims, Routledge, NY, 1990, Vol. I, 27
[98] A. J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1955, Vol. II, 10-13
[99] Sayyid Abū al-`Alā Mawdūdī, Towards Understanding the Qur'an, trans. and edited by Zafar Isḥāq Anṣārī, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1988, Vol. I, 9
[100] Ibid, 12
[101] Ibid, 12
[102] See M. Maḥmūd Ḥijāzī, al-Waḥdah al-Mawḍū`iyyah fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, Cairo, 1970/1390. Since then many books have written on the subject. See books on *"al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'i li al-Qur'ān"*.
[103] Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes in The Qur'ān, Bibliotheca Islamica, Chicago, 1980, xi
[104] Fazlur Rahman, Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition, The U of Chicago Press, Chicago, London, 1982, 6
[105] See details in Mir, Ibid, 38ff
[106] See his Mābadī Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān, Dār al-Ishā'at al-Islāmiyyah, Lahore, 1971/1391
[107] See Mustansir Mir, Coherence in the Qur'ān, 25-74; also see `Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Farāhī, Dalā'il al-Niẓām, al-Dā'irah al-Hamīdiyyah wa Maktabatuh, Azamgarh, India, 1968/1388 A.H.; Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, Mabādi-yi Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān, Dār al-Ishā'at al-Islāmiyyah, Lahore, Pakistan, 1971/1391 and his Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān, 8 vols., Fārān Foundation, Lahore, 1980; M. Ḥusayn al-Ṭabatabā'ī, al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, 20 vols., Mu'assasah al-`Ālami li l-Maṭbū`āt, Beirut, 1973-74; and Sayyid Quṭb, Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān, 6 vols., Dār al-Shurūq, Beirut, 1973-74
[108] M. Mir, Ibid, 62
[109] See Ibid, 19ff
[110] Mir, Ibid, 100
[111] This is reffered to as the process of "Organization". See Introduction to Psychology, 309ff. This approach is presently being used in many academic circles especially in language studies. Cambridge University's "Elementary Modern Standard Arabic", ed. by Peter F. Abboud, 1996, is a good example of this approach.
[112] See detailed study of the issue in C. B. Ferster and Skinner, Schedules of Reinforcement, Appleton-Century-Crofts, NY, 1957; Winfred F. Hill, Learning, A Survey of Psychological Interpretations, Harper Collins, NY, 1990, 75ff
[113] Hill, Ibid, 79
[114] Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, The Vision of Islam, Paragon House, NY, 1994, xviii
[115] S. Murata and W.C. Chittick, Ibid, xviii-xix
[116] M. Khalifa, Ibid, 21
[117] Ibid, 21
[118] Quoted by R. V. C. Bodley, The Messenger: The Life of Muhammad, Doubleday, NY, 1946, 237
[119] Gibb, Ibid, 25

[120] E. Dermengham, Ibid, 249

[121] G. Sale, The Koran, Commonly Called Al-Quran, with a Preliminary Discourse, Fredrick Warne, London, 1899, 47

[122] K. W. Morgan (ed.), Islam Interpreted by Muslims, Ronald Press, London, 1958, 27

[123] J.A. William, Islam, G. Braziller, NY, 1961, 15

[124] John Naish, The Wisdom of the Qur'an, Oxford, 1937, Preface, viii

[125] K. Armstrong, Muhammad, A Biography of the Prophet, Harper, San Francisco, 1992, 49

[126] R.V.C. Bodley, The Messenger, The Life of Mohammed, Greenwood Press, NY, 1946, 237

[127] Arnold Hottinger, The Arabs, Their History, Culture and Place in the Modern World, U of California Press, Los Angles, 1963, 24

[128] Quoted from Ameer Ali, The Spirit of Islam, Chatto & Windus, London, 1978, 395

[129] P.K. Hitti, The Arabs, A Short History, Regnery Gateway, Washington, D.C., 1993, 46-47

[130] Bodley, Ibid, 239

[131] See Afzalul Rahman, Encyclopedia of Seearh (ed.), Seerah Foundation, London, 1981, Vol. I, Book I, 185

[132] See for details Abū al-Ḥasan A. Nadawī, Mankind's Debt to the Prophet Muhammad, St. Cross College, Oxford, 1992, 6-7

[133] Hans Kung (Ed.), Christianity and the World Religions, 28-29

[134] Quoted above, also see Hitti, The Near East in History, D. Van Nostrand Co., NY, 1961, 194

[135] Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, Maktaba Jawāhar al-`Ulūm, Lahore, Pakistan, n.d., iv

[136] Ibid

[137] Ibid, iv-v

[138] A. J. Arberry, Aspects of Islamic Civilization as Depicted in Oriental Texts, Allen & Unwin, London, 1964, 11

[139] A. J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted, 2 vols., London, 1955, introduction, x, also in 1 vol., Oxford, 1964

[140] Ibid, x

[141] Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious Tradition", in Leonard Binder (Ed.), The Study of the Middle East, NY, 1976, 65

[142] T. Izutsu, Ethico-religious Concepts in the Qur'an, McGill UP, Montreal, 1966

[143] K. Cragg, The Mind of the Qur'an, London, 1973

[144] Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'an, Bibliotheca Islamica, Chicago, 1980

[145] *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren*, Berlin and NY, 1981. Hans Kung observes that "An apparently more solid and careful work than all the foregoing is Angelika Neuworth's *Studies on the Composition of the Meccan Suras* (1981). With her training in the form-critical approach to the Old Testament, Neuwirth can prove that, whatever the case with the rest of the Qur'an, the Meccan suras were put together by the Prophet himself for liturgical recitation, and that behind the text as we have it stands a single creative force, so that we are not reduced to postulating a mere editor who assembled variant readings with scissors and paste." Hans Kung, Josef van Ess, Heinrich von Stietencron and Heinz Bechert (Eds.), Christianity and the World Religions, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, NY, 1986, 34. Moreover, it is interesting to see how Neuwirth accepts the suras as units and how she analyses the intricate patterns of rhythm, rhyme, and assonance within each sura, and then structure of verses and their groupings within the suras that lead to accept the sura as a unit.

[146] Angelika Neuwirth, "Images and metaphors in the introductory sections of the makkan suras" in Approaches to the Qur'an edited by G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef, Routledge, London and NY, 1993, 30-31

[147] Issa J. Boullata, Ibid, 157

[148] All Arabic sources on "`Ulūm al-Qur'ān" like al-Suyūṭī, al-Zarkashī, al-Qaṭṭān, Zarzūr, mentioned above, have special chapters on the issue. In addition to the above mentioned see very good discussion by M. S. al-Rāf`ī, Tārīkh Ādāb al-Arab, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, Beirut, 1974/1394, 2, 33ff

[149] W.A. Graham, "Qur'an as Spoken Word", in R.C. Martin (Ed.), Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies, U of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1985, 30, for Muslims views see Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 114-118, Zarzūr, Ibid, 81-101, and Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 100

[150] See Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid

[151] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 100

[152] See Watt, What is Islam, 18-20, and also Fazlur Rahman, Islam, U of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966, 30-31

[153] Alfred Guillaume, Islam, Penguin Books, Baltimore, Maryland, 1969, 56

[154] See Watt, Bell's Introduction to the Qur'an, 30, and Sir William Muir, The Life of Mahomet, Smith Elder and Co., London, 1878, 551

[155] Helmut Gatje, Ibid, 24

[156] For Sir W. Muir's Missionary zeal see Norman Daniel, Islam, Europe and Empire, UP, Edinburgh, 1966, 32-33

[157] Sir W. Muir, Ibid, 551

[158] Watt, Bell's Introduction, 31, and also see Muir, Ibid

[159] See H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers (Eds.), Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, Cornell UP, NY, 1965, "Al-Kuran", p:273

[160] Gatje, Ibid, 24

[161] Watt, Bell's Introduction, 37

[162] Muir, Ibid, Quoted from M.H. Haykal, The Life of Muhammad, Trans. by I.R. Al-Faruqi, North American Trust Publication, IN, 1976, lxv

[163] Watt, Bell's Introduction, 37, and Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 273, see also Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 117-119 and Zarzūr, Ibid, 85-86

[164] See Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān, 1, 57-58 and Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 114-118

[165] M. Mir, Ibid, 100, see for instance Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqan, 1, 61ff, also Al-Qaṭṭān, Mabāhith, 133ff

[166] M. Ali, Ibid, 26-27

[167] Ibid, 28

[168] Muir, Ibid, Quoted from Haykal, IXIV

[169] John Burton, The Collection of the Qur'an, Cambridge UP, London, 1977, 239

[170] K. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, Oxford UP, NY, 1970, 96

[171] Watt, Bell's Introduction, 30

[172] Alfred Guillaume, Islam, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1969, 56

[173] Tritton, Islam, 15, for a biased view see Morey, Ibid, 110-115

[174] See for details Watt, Bell's Introduction, 40, Burton, Ibid, 118ff, Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 120-121, Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Trans. by M. Muḥsin Khān, Kazi Publications, Lahore, 1979, VI, 477-478

[175] See Watt, Ibid, 40-44 and Burton, Ibid, 117-127

[176] Watt, Ibid, 40

[177] Watt, Ibid, 44 and 46, and Gibb, Ibid, 34

[178] Burton, Ibid, 121

[179] Muir, Ibid, quoted from Kaykal, IXVI

[180] See Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 122-126, Burton, Ibid,141-143, and Al-Bukhārī, 478-80

[181] See Burton, 138 and 156, Tritton, Ibid, 15, and Al-Bukhārī, Ibid,

[182] Gatje, Ibid, 25, also see Watt, Bell's Introduction, 44-46

[183] Watt, Ibid, 46

[184] Quoted from Haykal, Ibid, Ixviii

[185] Burton, Ibid,157

[186] Gibb, Ibid, 34

[187] K. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, 97

[188] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 100

[189] Watt, Ibid, 44

[190] See Gatje, Ibid, 25, for more details see Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 127-128, and Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān, 1, 59ff

[191] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 100

[192] "Islamic Religious Tradition", in The Study of the Middle East, edited by L. Binder, Wiley, NY, 1976, 61

[193] Martine (Ed.), Ibid, 158

[194] See Vermes book Scripture and Tradition in Judaism, Haggadic Studies, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973

[195] J. Wansbrough, Qur'anic Studies; Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation, Oxford UP, Oxford, 1977, 1

[196] Ibid, 1

[197] See Ibid, 1, 40-43, 47-48
[198] See Ibid, 134
[199] There have been previous efforts to show the Judeo-Christian background of the Qur'an. See R. Bell, The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment, Macmillan, London, 1926, and Hartwig Hirschfeld, Jewish Elements in the Qur'an, 1878, C.C. Torrey, The Jewish Foundation of Islam, KTAV Publishinh House, NY, 1967, Abraham Geiger, Judaism and Islam, prolegomenon by Moshe Pearlman, KTAV Publishing House, NY, 1970, also Abraham I. Katsh, Judaism and the Koran, A.S. Barnes and Co., NY, 1962
[200] Wansbrough, Quranic Studies, 20ff
[201] Bell, Ibid
[202] S. M. Zwemer, The Muslim Christ Oliphant, Edinburgh, 1912, 12
[203] Menzes, Ibid, 161
[204] J. Gardner, The Faiths of the World, 2 Vols., 4 Fullarton, 1920, vol. 2, 279
[205] See D. S. Morgoliouth, The Early Development of Mohammedanism, Williams and Norgate, London, 1914 and also his Mohammedanism, Butterworth, London, 1928
[206] C.C. Torrey, The Jewish Foundation of Islam, KTAV Publishinh House, NY, 1967
[207] See Goitein, "Mohammad's Inspiration by Judaism", Journal of Jewish Studies, 9 (1958), 149-162, also his Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages, NY, 1955
[208] J. N. Anderson, Ibid, 57
[209] Abraham Geiger, Judaism and Islam, prolegomenon by Moshe Pearlman, KTAV Publishing House, NY, 1970, xx
[210] Bell, Ibid, 70
[211] M. Khalifa, Ibid, 14
[212] J. Fueck, "The Originality of the Arabian Prophet", in M. L. Swartz (ed.), Studies on Islam, 88
[213] Fueck, Ibid, 88
[214] Ibid, 89
[215] Ibid, 92-93
[216] For Lot see Al-Qura'n 21:74-75, 26:160-173; for David and Solomon see 21:78-82, 27:15-44, 38:17-40
[217] See for details Alia N. Athar, Prophets: Models for Humanity, Library of Islam, Des Plains, IL and distributed by Kazi Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1993; Ḥifẓ al-Raḥmān Ṣāḥib Sayohārwī, Qiṣaṣ al-Qur'ān, (Urdu), Maktabah Madaniyyah, Lahore, Pakistan, !371 A.H.; `Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najjār, Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā', al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā', Egypt, n.d.,; Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Najjār, Tāri'kh al-Anbiyā', Dār al-'i`taṣām, Cairo, 1981/1401 A.H.
[218] A. H. Johns, "The quranic presentation of Joseph story: naturalistic or formulaic language?" in G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (eds.), Approaches to the Qur'an, 40-41; also see A'fi'f A. Taba'rah, al-Yahu'd fi al-Qur'an, Dar al-A'lm lil Malayi'n, Beirut, 1982, 251-256
[219] Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, 85
[220] Ibid, 83-84
[221] Fueck, Ibid, 94-95
[222] Watt, Ibid, 160
[223] M. Khalifa, Ibid 16
[224] Ibid, 16; Khalifa gives eight reasons to refute this claim of dependence as implausible.
[225] Mawdudi, Ibid, Vol. IV, 367; also see Muḥammad Taqī-ud-din Al-Hilālī and Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān, Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'ān, Kazi Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 1991, Vol. 4, 96-7; also see Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-`Aẓīm, Dār wa Maktabah al-Hilāl, Beirut, 1990/1410 A.H., Vol. 3, 453
[226] Menezes, Ibid, 161 and Gardner, ibid, Vol. II, 279.
[227] Fueck, Ibid, 89
[228] John Wansbrough, The Sectarian Milieu, Oxford UP, London, 1978, 58
[229] See his Qur'anic Studies; Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation, Oxford UP, Oxford, 1977, 49, and also Sectarian Milieu, 58, 139
[230] Sectarian Milieu, 58-59
[231] See A. Rippin's essay in Martin (Ed.), Ibid, 161
[232] Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, Hagarism, 3
[233] Ibid, 17-18

234 Ibid, 18
235 Ibid, 18
236 Serjeant's review of "Qur'anic Studies" in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1987, 77
237 Ibid, 76
238 N. Daniel's review of "Hagarism" in Journal of Semitic Studies 24 (1979), 296
239 Martine (Ed.), Ibid, 231
240 Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'an, xiii
241 Ibid, 201
242 Ibid, 199
243 Richard W. Bulliet, Islam, The View From the Edge, Columbia UP, NY, 1994, 23-24, also see G.E. von Grunbaum, Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition, London, 1955
244 Norman Daniel, Islam and the West, UP, Edinburgh, 1966, 34, for more details see 33-39, and also his book Islam, Europe and Empire, part one " The Developing Image", and also Caesar Farah, Islam, Beliefs and Observations, Barrons, NY, 1987, 28
245 Muir, Ibid, quoted from Haykal, Ixvii
246 Burton, Ibid, 239-240
247 H. Lammens, Ibid, 38
248 See for details "Some Notes on the Imamite Attitudes to the Qur'an", in S.M. Stern (Ed.), Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition, Oxford, 1972, also Tritton, Ibid, 15, for a detailed study in Arabic see Iḥsān A. Ẓahīr, al-Shī`ah wa al-Qur'ān, Idārah Tarjumān al-Sunnah, Lahore, Pakistan, 1983/1403, 14-20, also see John McClintock and James Strong, Encyclopedia of Biblical and Ecclesiastical Literature, Grand Rapids, 1981, v, 152
249 See Ẓahīr, Ibid, 32-33 and also Sa'dī Yāsīn, al-Burhān, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beruit, 1978, 11
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251 Gatje, Ibid, 25
252 Burton, Ibid, 145
253 Quoted from Haykal, Ibid Ixviii
254 Mawdūdī, Ibid, Vol. IV, 283
255 Lammens, Ibid, 44
256 David Pinault, The Shiites, St. Martin's Press, NY, 1992, 27
257 S. Hossein Nasr, A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World, Kazi Publications, Inc., Chicago, 1994, 10
258 See Kristina Nelson, "The Art of Reciting the Qur'ān, Appendix B, "The Seven Ahruf and the Qiraa't", U of California Press, Berkeley, 1980, for a detailed study on "seven", "ten", and "fourteen" qira'āt see Labib al-Sa'id, Recited Koran, A History of the First Recorded Version, Trans. and edited by Bernard Weiss, M.A. Rauf and Morroe Berger, The Darwin Press, Princeton, 1975, 53-56, 127-30, and also A. Jeffery, Materials for the History of the text of the Qur'an, The Old Codics, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1937 later published by Russal and F. Moore, NY, 1952 , also see Saleh al-Wahaihu, "A Study of Seven Qur'ānic Variants", in International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies, 5 (1989), no. 2, 1-57 and also see al-Bukhārī, VI, 481-82
259 See `Uthmān b. Sa`īd al-Dānī, Kitāb al-Taysīr fī al-Qira'āt al-Sab`a, ed. by Otto Bertzel, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1996/1416; and Aḥmad b. `Alī Ibn al-Bādhash, Kitāb al-'Iqnā` fī al-Qira'āt al-Saba`, ed. by `Abd al-Majīd Qaṭāsh, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, Umm al-Qurā University, Makka, 1403 A.H.
260 For their impact on the subsequent history of *Uṣūl al-Tafsīr* and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* see Muḥammd b. `Umar b. Sālim Bāzmūl, al-Qira'āt, wa atharuhā fī al-Tafsīr wa al-Aḥkām, Dār al-Hijrah, Riyadh, 1996/1417
261 See A. Jeffery, Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an,
262 Tritton, Ibid, 18
263 Muir, Ibid, Quoted from Haykal, lxvii
264 William A. Graham,"Qur'an as Spoken Word", in Martine (Ed.), Ibid, 35
265 Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, see Al-Qaṭṭān, 149-167, Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān, 1, 41-80, see for more details, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Trans. by Ahmad Hasan, S.M. Ashraf Publishers, Lahore, Pakistan, 1984, 1113-1121
266 H. Park Smith, The Bible and Islam, ARNO Press, NY, 1973, 25
267 Bodley, The Messenger, 235-236

268 M. Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, iii

269 Hitti, The Near East in History, 194

270 Esposito, Islam, The Straight Path,

271 S. H. Nasr, A Young Muslim's Guide, 9

272 J.A. Williams, Ibid, 15

273 For "Naskh" see Burton, Ibid, 46-67; see also A. Jeffery, Islam: Muhammad and His Religion, The Library of Liberal Arts, Bobbs Merrill, NY, 1958, 66ff. For Arabic sources see Ibn Ḥazam al-Ẓāhirī, al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, ed. by A. S. al-Bandārī, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1986/1406; Ibn al-Jawzī, Nawāsikh al-Qur'ān, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, Beirut; Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Ḥāzmī al-Hamdānī, al-I`tabār fī al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh min al-'Āthār, ed. by A. Amīn Qal`ajī, Dār al-Wa`y, Ḥalab, 1983. All sources on `Ulūm al-Qur'ān address the issue in details. See al-Qaṭṭān Ibid, 224-238

274 All the sources on *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* elaborate this point. `Ubaydullah al-Karkhī's Uṣūl al-Fiqh; Aḥmad al-Jaṣṣāṣ's al-Fuṣūl fī al-Uṣūl; al-Qāḍī `Abdul Jabbār's al-Ikhtilāf fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh; Ibn Ḥazm's al-Aḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām; `Abdul Malik al-Juwaynī's al-Burhān fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh; al-Bayḍāwī's Uṣūl al-Fiqh; al-Ghazālī's al-Mustaṣfā min `Ilm al-Uṣūl; al-Rāzī's al-Muḥṣal fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh; Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī's al-Aḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām; al-Shāṭibī's al-Muwāfaqāt; and al-Ājrī's al-Sharī`ah are just a few examples to be mentioned here. There is no dirth of modern resoures on the issue. Abū Zahrah and many other modern sholars of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* have written extensively on this topic.

275 Andrew Rippin, Muslims, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, Routledge, NY, 1990, Vol. I, 24

276 Hans Kung (Ed.), Christianity and the World Religions, 14-15

277 M. Arkoun is an example of such an approach to the Qur'ān. It may be noticed here that the Qur'ānic Science of the "*Asbāb al-Nuzūl*" i.e., the context of the revelation, is already a kind of historical approach to the text of the Qur'ān. The traditional Muslim scholars should not be alarmed by such inferences. The Qur'ānic text presents a different scenario and situation than the one discussed about the Bible in the previous chapters.

278 Fazlur Rahman, Islam, U of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1979, 31

279 Ibid, 33

280 Ibid, 32

281 Ibid, 39

282 See Elice Boulding, The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Times, West View Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1976; David and Vera Mace, Marriage East and west, Macgibbon & Knee, London, 1960; P. Thomas, Indian Women Through the Ages, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964

283 See Rahmat Ali Chaudhry, Woman's Plight, Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 1987, 238ff; Armstrong, Muhammad, 190ff

284 See a detailed discussion of woman in Islam in Afzalur Rahman (ed.), Encyclopaedia of Seerah, Vol. V, "Role of Muslim Woman in Society"

285 See Mary Wollstonecraft, Subjection of Women, J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1955 and her The Rights of Women, E.P. Dutton and Co., NY, 1955; R. Patai, Women in the Modern World, Free Press, NY, 1967; F. Lundberg and F.F. Marynia, Modern Women, The Lost Sex, Harper and Brothers, NY and London, 1947; J.L. Despert, Children of Divorce, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, NY, 1953; K. Stern, The Flight from Women, G. Allen & Unwin, London, 1966

286 See for instance Afzalur Rahman (ed.), , Ibid, vol. III, 645ff; for an interesting account of the issue, B. Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, OUP, NY, 1990

287 See Afzalur Rahman, Ibid, Imām al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā al-`Ulūm, 2, 195ff; more details in Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, The Rights of the Slaves, Cairo

288 See more details in Afzalur Rahman, Ibid, Ghazālī, Ibid

289 See Afzalur Rahman, Ibid, 667ff

290 See details in Yūsuf al-Qarḍāwī, Fiqh al-Zakāt, Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo, 1986/1406, vol. 2, 619ff

291 Afzalur Rahman, Ibid, 671

292 Ibid, 675

293 Andrew Rippin, Muslims, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, Volume 2: The Contemporary Period, Routledge, NY, 1993, 104

294 Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'an, 99

295 Ibid, 99

[296] A. Rippins, Ibid, 110
[297] I. R. Netton, Text and Trauma, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1996, 79
[298] Ibid, 79
[299] See Ibid, 83ff
[300] G. Sale, The Koran, 50
[301] See W. Muir, Life of Mahomet, 4 Vols., Smith, London, 1860, II, 100
[302] See G.M. Draycott, Mahomet, Founder of Islam, Martin Secker, London, 1916, 335
[303] See M. Khalifa, Ibid, 10
[304] S. G. Champion and D. Short, Reading From World Religions, Fawcett, Greenwich, (U.S.A), 1959, 240
[305] F.J.L. Menezes, The Life and Religion of Mohammed, the Prophet of Arabia, Sands, London, 1911, 158
[306] W. M. Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, OUP, Karachi, 1979, 53
[307] M.Khalifa, Ibid, 18
[308] Ibid, 29
[309] See M. Bucaille, The Bible, the Qur'ān and Science, American Trust Publications, Indiana, 1978 and also his What Is the Origin of Man?, Seghers, Paris, Ninth Edition, 1983
[310] See S. Hossein Nasr, Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study, World of Islam Festival Publ. Co., London, 1976 and also his "Science and Civilization in Islam, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, U.K., 1987
[311] See Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad, Signs In The Heavens, Writers' Inc. -International, Beltsville, Maryland, 1992
[312] `Abd al-Majīd al-Zindānī, Kitāb Tawḥīd al-Khāliq, Maktabah Tayyibah, Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia, 1989/1409, and his Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Maktabah Tayyibah, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia, 1990/1410 A.H.
[313] See Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 207-210, also see Bell's Introduction
[314] J. Milton Cowan (Ed.), A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, Macdonald and Evans, London, 1974, 197
[315] See Al-Qaṭṭān, Ibid, 208
[316] Al-Qur'ān, 3:7
[317] W. A. Graham, Qur'ān as Spoken word, in Martine (Ed.), Ibid, 29
[318] T. Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, 75
[319] Ismā`īl Rajā al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd: Its Implications for Thought and Life, International Institute of islamic Thought, Herndon, Virginia, 2nd edition, 1992/1412, 10-11
[320] Charles Le Gai Eaton, Islam And The Destiny of Man, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, 52
[321] Peter J. Awn, "Faith and Practice" in Islam edited by Marjorie Kelly, Praeger Special Studies, NY, 1984, 4
[322] S. Abul A'la Maududi, Four Basic Qur'anic Terms, Trans. from original Urdu version by Abu Asad, Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore, Pakistan, 2nd Ed., 1982, 10; also see al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī, Mu'jam Mufradāt-i- alfāẓ al-Qur'ān, Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī, 1972, 17
[323] Murata and Chittick, Ibid, 47
[324] Eaton, Ibid, 54
[325] Louis Gardet, "God in Islam", Ency. of Religions, Vol. 6, 26
[326] See for more details Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalvi, Faza IL-e-Aamal, Darul Ishaat, Karachi, Pakistan, n.d., Book 4 "Virtues of Zikr", 86-169
[327] See Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, Vol. 3, 366-67
[328] See Muḥammad bin `Alī bin Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, Fatḥ al-Qadīr, Dār al-Fikr, 1973/1393, Vol. 3, 106-107; also Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 368-78; also Al-Hilālī and Khān, Ibid, Vol. 3, 331; Al-Bukhārī, Vol. 6, 185;
[329] See al-Shawkanī, Ibid, Vol. 5, 54-55
[330] See for more detailsMuḥammad Zakariyya Kāndhalvī, Faza IL-e-Aamal, Darul Ishaat, Karachi, Pakistan, n.d., Book 4 "Virtues of Zikr", 86-97
[331] Kāndhalvī, Ibid, 114, also see Walī-ud-Dīn Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah al-Khaṭīb al-`Umarī al-Tabrīzī, Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābīh, trans. by Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore, Pakistan, 1980, Vol. 1, 17-23
[332] Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābīh, Vol. 1, 23

[333] Kāndhalvī, Ibid, 111-12, there is a clear and very authentic hadith that declares the confession as the best of the formulas of remembrance of God. See Kāndhalvī, Ibid, 109

[334] Ismā'īl Rājī al Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd: Its Implications for Thought and Life, International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, Virginia, U.S.A.1992/1412 A.H., 1

[335] L. Gardet, "ALLĀH" Ency. of Islam, New Edition, Vol. I, 406

[336] For all these kinds of verses see M. Fowād al-Bāqī, Al-Mua'Jam al-Mufahras li Alfāẓ al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Dār wa Matābi' al-Sha'ab, 1945, 38-40; S. Nūr al-Ḥasan Bukhārī has compiled a comprehensive book on the issue in Urdu language. He has pinpointed 23 kinds of formulas that Qur'an has used to negate associationism and affirm the Unicity and Transcendence of God. See Bukhārī, Tawḥīd aowr Shirk kī Ḥaqīqat, Dār al-Taṣnīf wa al-Ishā`at, Multan, Pakistan, 1393 A.H., 62-156

[337] The translation is from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, THE HOLY QUR-ĀN, King Fahd Holy Qur-an Printing Complex, Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, Saudi Arabia, !410 A.H.

[338] For a detailed study of this verse see M. M. Ayoub, The Qur'an and Its Interpreters, Vol. 2, 57-65

[339] M. M. Ayoub, Ibid, 2, 58

[340] Abu 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Jāmi'a li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, 18 vols., Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, Cairo, 1387/1967, Vol. II, 268; the translation is taken from Mahmoud M. Ayoub, The Qur'an and its Interpreters, SUNY, Albany, 1984, Vol. 1, 247-48

[341] `Imād al-Dīn Abī al-Fidā Isma'īl ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-`Aẓīm, Dār al-Hilāl, Beirut, 6 Vols., 1990/1410, vol. 1, 336; for more virtues of the verse see M. M. Ayoub, Ibid, 247-249

[342] Al-Bukhārī, 9 Vols., Kazi Publications, Lahore, Vol. 6, Hadith No. 530: and also see M. T. Al-Hilali and M. M. Khan, Ibid, Vol. 1, 169

[343] See M.M. Ayoub, Ibid

[344] Mowdūdī, Towards Understanding the Qur'an, Vol. 1, 196; see more details about the verse M. M. Ayoub, Ibid, 247-52

[345] L. Gardet, "God in Islam", Ency. of Religions, vol. 6, 27

[346] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 9-10

[347] See for details Sayyid Qutb, In The Shade Of The Qur'an, trans. from Arabic by M. A. Salahi and A. A. Shamis, MWH London Publishers, London, 1979,Vol. 30, 327-334

[348] T. B. Irving, The Qur'an, AMANA Books, Brattleboro, Vermont, 3rd Ed., 1988, 398

[349] S. Quṭb, Ibid, 350

[350] Al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 5, 513; also see Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 6; there is another report that says that it were the Jews of Madinah who directed this question to the Prophet. See Al-Shawkanī, Ibid, 513-15; for more details see Abū al-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī, Asbāb Nuzūl al-Qurān, Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, Cairo, 1389/1969

[351] The terms "Allah al-Wāḥid" and "Ilāh Wāḥid" have been used in the Qur'an for 21 times.

[352] S. Qutb, Ibid, 350

[353] See S. Mahmūd al-Alūsī, Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, Maktabah Imdādiyyah, Multan, Pakistan, n.d., 15, 314; Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān, Idārah al-Ma'ārif, Karachi, Pakistan, Vol. 8, 843

[354] Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin al-Ḥusayn bin Alī al-Bayhaqī, Kitāb al-Asmā wa al-Ṣifāt, Dār Iḥyā al-Turath al-`Arabī, Beirut, n.d., 32

[355] L. Gardet, "God in Islam", Ibid, 28

[356] Gardet, Ibid;

[357] Al-Jurjānī, Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, Cairo, 1907, Vol. 8, 216

[358] Gardet, Ibid, 28

[359] Al-Iṣfahanī, Ibid, 294

[360] Al-Alūsī, Ibid, 15, 314

[361] S. Quṭb, Ibid, 353

[362] M. Asad, Ibid, 985

[363] L. Gardet, Ibid, 28; most of the Qur'anic scholars take it as categorically rejecting Christian dogma of "Trinity". See al-Alūsī, Ibid 15, 317-319

[364] S. Quṭb, Ibid, 353

[365] See for details of Islamic perspective on the issue M. M. Rahmatullah Kairanvi, Izhar-ul-Haq, Muslim World League, Makkah, S.A, 1989/1409, vol. 2, 222ff and vol. 3; Abū al-Baqā' Ṣāliḥ b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ja`farī,

al-Radd `alā al-Naṣārā, ed. by M. M. Ḥasānayn, Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo, 1988/1409; Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ liman Baddal Dīn al-Masīḥ; Ibn Ḥazam al-Zāhirī, al-Faṣal fī al-Milal wa al-ahwā' wa al-niḥal, Maktabah al-Salām al-`Ālmiyyah, Cairo, n.d., vol. 2, 2ff

[366] Quṭb, Ibid, 353-54

[367] M. Asad, Ibid, 985; for more detailed study see Jadullah Mahmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, Tafsīr al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl, edited by Muṣṭafā Ḥussain Aḥmad, 4 vols. 2nd edition, Cairo, 1373/1953, Vol. 4

[368] Al-Bukhārī, Kazi Publications, Vol. 6, Hadīth No. 498

[369] Al-Bukhārī, Vol. 9, Hadīth No. 470

[370] S. Murata and W. C. Chittick, The Vision of Islam, 49

[371] P. J. Awn, Ibid, 4

[372] Richard C. Martin, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersy, 1982, 92

[373] Mawdūdī, The Meaning of the Qur'an, VII, 201-2

[374] Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur-an, English translation of the meanings and commentry, 639

[375] See al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk (Annals), Ed. by M. J. de Goeje, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1879-1901, 15 vols., vol. I, 1192-93; and his Tafsīr, Cairo, 1954, 30 vols., XXVII, 186ff.; also see Ibn Sa'd, Ṭabaqāt, Ed. by E. Schau, Leiden, 1905 etc., 9 vols., I, i, 137-38

[376] The fact that the story has been recorded by historians like al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Sa`d does not make the story authentic by itself. See details in M. M. Ahsan and Kidwai (eds.), Sacrilege Versus Civility: Muslim Perspectives on The Satanic Verses Affair, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1991, 138-9

[377] See S. Rushdie, The Satanic Verses, Viking Penguin, London & NY, 1988; Ist US paperback edition by Dover in 1992. For the religious and political uproar see Ahsan and Kidwai, Ibid; Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Interreligious Perspective, Symposium Series, 27, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990; Malise Ruthven, A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam, Chatto & Windus, London, 1990; I. R. Netton, Text and Trauma, An East-West Primer, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1996

[378] Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, 101-102

[379] Watt, Ibid, 103; also see his Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān, Edinburgh UP, 1970, 55-56

[380] Watt; Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman, OUP, London, 1967, 61

[381] Maxime Rodinson, Muhammed, trans. by Anne Carter, Pantheon Books, Random House, NY, 1971, 106

[382] Watt, Ibid, 104

[383] Watt, Bell's Introduction, 56

[384] Watt, Ibid, 101

[385] Rodinson, Ibid, 107

[386] Ibid 105

[387] Watt, Ibid, 105

[388] Rodinson, Ibid, 107

[389] Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī, Fatḥ al-Bārī bi sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām al-Bukhārī, Ed. by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Muḥammad F. `Abd al-Bāqī and Q. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Dār al-Diyān li al-Turāth, Cairo, 1407,1987, Vol. 8, 293; also Mawdūḍī, The Meaning of the Qur'an, trans. by Ch. M. Akbar and edited by A. A. Kamal, Islamic Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 4th ed., 1983, vol. VII, 216

[390] Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī, Fatḥ al-Bārī bi sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām al-Bukhārī, Ed. by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Muḥammad F. `Abd al-Bāqī and Q. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Dār al-Diyān li al-Turāth, Cairo, 1407,1987, Vol. 8, 293

[391] Ibn Ḥajar, Ibid, 293; also see Al-Zurqānī, `Ala al-Mawahib, vol. 1, 330; and Allama Shibli Nu'mani, Sirat-Un-Nabi, trans. by M.T. B. Budayuni, Kazi Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 1979, Vol. 1, 214; Akram Ḍiyā al-`Umrī, al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah al-Ṣaḥīḥa, Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariyyah, Qaṭar, 1991, vol. 1, 171-2

[392] Ibn Ḥajar, Ibid, 293-4

[393] Ibn Ḥajar, Ibid, 294

[394] Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Irāqī, al-Taqyīd wa al-Īḍāḥ, 70-1

[395] Ibid, 73

[396] M. M. Ahsan, "The Muslim Arguement: The `Satanic' Verses and the Orientalists", in Ahsan and Kidwai (eds.), Sacrilege Versus Civility: Muslim Perspectives on The Satanic Verses Affair, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1991, 132

[397] Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, vol. 4, 170-1

[398] Al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 3, 462

[399] Ibid

[400] Al-Albānī attributes the statement to Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b Khuzaymah and not to Ibn Isḥāq, the writer of *sīrah*. See Naṣb al-Majānīq, 25

[401] Al-Alūsī, Rūḥ al-M`ānī, 9, 177

[402] Al-Qāḍī `Iyāḍ b. Mūsa b. `Iyāḍ, al-Shafā bi Ta`rīf Ḥuquq al-Muṣṭafā, ed. by `Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, Beirut, 1977, vol.2, 750; also Mawdūḍī, The Meaning of the Qur'an, vol. VII, 216; also see Al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 3, 462

[403] Al-Qāḍī `Iyāḍ, Ibid, 2, 751

[404] Ibid, 752-53

[405] Ibid, 755

[406] Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Abdullah b. Muḥammad known as Ibn al-`Arabī, Aḥkām al-Qurān, for details see Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, Naṣb al-Majānīq li nasf Qiṣah al-Ghrānīq, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beruit, 2nd ed., 1409/1989, 26-30

[407] See his Tafsīr "Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb" vol. 6, 193-97

[408] See his Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, 12, 80-84

[409] See Ibn Hajar, al-Fatḥ, 8, 498

[410] See his `Umdah al-Qārī, 9, 47

[411] See his Tafsīr Fatḥ al-Bayān

[412] Mawdūḍī, Ibid, and al-Alūsī, Rūḥ al-M`ānī, 9, 177-186

[413] Shiblī Nu`mānī, Sirat, 1, 214

[414] Mawdūḍī, Ibid, 217

[415] Mawdūḍī, Ibid, 217

[416] Mawdūḍī, Ibid, 218

[417] Mawdūḍī, Ibid, 218-19

[418] S. Quṭb, Ibid, 4, 2432-33

[419] M. M. Shafī`, Ibid, 6, 277; A. A. Iṣlāḥī, Ibid, 5, 271

[420] M. H. Haykal, Ibid, 108; also see Antonie Wessels, A Modern Arabic Biography of Muḥammad: A Critical Study of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal's Ḥayāt Muḥammad, E.J. Brill, Lieden, 1972. 57-64

[421] Ibid, 107

[422] Ibid 109; about the conversion of `Umar T. W. Arnold observes: "While the result of the embassy to Abyssinia was being looked for in Mecca with the greatest expectancy, there occured the conversion of a man, who before had been one of the most bitter enemies of Muhammad, and had opposed him with the utmost persistence and fanaticism- a man whom the Muslims had every reason then to look upon as their most terrible and virulent enemy, though afterwards he shines as one of the noblest figures in the early history of Islam,, *viz*, Umar b. al-Khattab.... The conversion of Umar is a turning-point in the history of Islam: the Muslims were now able to take up a bolder attitude. Muhammad left the house of al-Arqam and the believers publically performed their devotions together round the Ka`bah...." Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan, 1979, 16-7

[423] Ibid, 111-2

[424] Ibid, 112; for details see Muhammad `Abduh, Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah, Cairo, 1911, 144

[425] M. Haykal, Ibid, 114

[426] See his Naṣb al-Majānīq li nasf Qiṣah al-Ghrānīq, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beruit, 2nd ed., 1409/1989

[427] Z. A. Qureshi, Prophet Muhammad and His Western Critics, vol. II, 615-32

[428] Qureshi, Ibid, 2, 625

[429] Rodinson, Muhammad, 105-106

[430] Ibid, 105

[431] Ibid, 106

[432] See Ibn Hishām, 1, 293-94 for more details
[433] Ibid, 1, 265-66
[434] Z. A. Qureshi, Prophet Muhammad and His Western Critics, vol. II, 622
[435] J. Burton, "Those are the High-Flying Cranes", in Journal of Semitic Studies, 15, no. 2, (1970), 265
[436] Ibid, 248
[437] K. Armstrong, Muhammad, 113
[438] See Qureshi, Ibid, II, 639-46
[439] Qureshi, Ibid, 645
[440] Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, 104
[441] Stanley Lane-Poole, Studies in a Mosque, Khayats, Beirut, 1966, 127-8, (Italics added); also see Ibid, 129-32
[442] Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, 101
[443] See Watt, Bell's Introduction, 110
[444] Hartwig Hirschfeld, New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'an, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1902, 35
[445] See Watt, Bell's Introduction, 213
[446] See Tafsir of the this chapter, for instance, al-Showkānī, vol. 5
[447] See Watt, Bell's Introduction, 206-7
[448] See for instace 35:3; 15:96; 38:5. Most of the Makkan chapters contain many verses denouncing polytheism, idolatry and emphasizing upon God's Unity and Transcendence.
[449] See Ibn Hisham, 1, 265; 293-94; 417-19
[450] R. A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, CUP, 1953, 160
[451] Julian Obermann's article "Islamic Origins" in The Arab History, edited by Nabih Amin Faris, Princeton UP, 1944, 99; see also pp 100-05
[452] Reuben Levy, The Social Structure of Islam, CUP, 1959, (Introduction) p:1; also see A. S. Tritton, Islam, Beliefs and Practices, Hutchinson, London, 1951, 10
[453] D. S. Margoliouth's article about the Prophet in the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1967 edition, vol. VIII, 875
[454] Francesco Gabrieli, Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam, trans. from Italian by Virginia Luling & Rosamund Linell, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1968, 49
[455] Charles J. Adams, *Islam* in Man and His Gods, Encyclopaedia of World Religions edited by Jeoffrey Parrinder, Hamlyn Publishing Co., London, 1971, 394
[456] R. Bell, Introduction to the Qur'an, UP, Edinburgh, 1958, 22
[457] Bell, Ibid, 139-40 (Italics added).
[458] See J. M. Rodwell, The Koran, (Translated from the Arabic) with Introduction by Rev. G. Margoliouth, Everyman's Library, New York, 1950, 3-4 of "Preface", pp. 13-14
[459] See Bell, Introduction, 102
[460] See Washington Irving, Life of Mahomet, Everyman's Library, NY, 1949, 46; also see R. Bosworth Smith, Muhammad and Muhammadanism, 2nd edition, Lahore, Pakistan, 83; also see J. W. H. Stobart, Islam and Its Founder, SPCK, London, 1901, 65
[461] P. de Lacy Johnstone, Muhammad and His Power, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1901, 58
[462] See Colliers Encyclopaedia, Macmillan Educational Corporation, NY, 1978, vol. 16, 690-91
[463] We have the opportunity to quote him earlier in this chapter. See "Allah" in Encyclopaedia of Islam; and "Mohammad" in the Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 1960 edition, vol. 15, 647
[464] E. Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. II, 660
[465] See Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II, 307-8
[466] See Hitti, History of the Arabs, Macmillan, London, 9th ed., 1968, 113; his Capital Cities of Islam, U of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1973, 13-14
[467] J. J. Saunders, A History of Medieval Islam, London, 24; also see E. C. Hodgkin, The Arabs, OUP, 1966, 26-8; Anthony Nutting, The Arabs, London, 1964, 19; F. R. J. Verhoeven, Islam, Its Origin and Spread in Words, Maps and Pictures, Djambatan, Amsterdam, 1962, 23; Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History, Hutchinson U Library, London, 3rd ed., 1964, 39 and also see G. E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East, Methun, London, 2nd ed., 1964, 12

[468] See Jouco Bleeker & Geo Widengren (eds.), Historia Religionum, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, vol. II, 128

[469] See J. C. G. Greig (ed.), Religions of Mankind Today and Yesterday, trans. by Niele L. Jensen, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh/London, 1967, 185

[470] Kenneth Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, OUP, NY, 1964, 79; also his The Event of the Qur'an, G. Allen & Unwin, London, 1971, 14; also see Edward Sell, The Faith of Islam, SPCK, London, 4th ed., revised & enlarged, 97-8; also Erich W. Bethman, Bridge to Islam, G. Allen & Unwin, London, 1953, 23-4; also P. Schaff, History of the Christian Church, NY, 1888, vol. IV, 168; Alfred Guilaume, Islam, Penguin Books, 1969, 29

[471] J. C. G. Greig (ed.), Religions of Mankind Today and Yesterday, 185

[472] A.Y. Ali, Abid, 567

[473] For more detials see Mawdudi, Ibid, IV, 33-36

[474] H. P. Smith, The Bible and Islam, 103

[475] The word *Jinn* comes from the Arabic verb "*Janna*" which means to hide. Therefore, the embryo hidden in the womb is called a *Janīn* and the heart hidden in the chest is called as the *Janān*. As the jinns are invisible to human eyes in their normal original state that is why they are referred to as jinns or hidden ones.

[476] Ibn Taymiyyah has given a detailed account of the Islamic concept of Jinn in his *Risālah*. See Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on The Jinn, abridged and translated by Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Tawheed Publications, Riyadh, 1989/1409-10, 1-31; also see Ahmad b. Ali Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, Fath al-Bari, Matba`ah al-Salafiyyah, Cairo, 1st ed., 1961, vol. 6, p.344 and vol. 8, p.675

[477] Ibid, 104

[478] Toshihiko Izutsu, God And Man In The Koran, AYER Company Publishers, Inc., Salem, New Hampshire, 1987, 16

[479] Ibid, 16-17

[480] Ibid, 42

[481] Toshihiko Izutsu, God And Man In The Koran, 15

[482] Mawdūdī, Ibid, IV, 320-21

[483] Mawdūdī, Ibid, IV, 319

[484] Translation is from Irving

[485] Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Jami' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān, edited by Mahmud Muhammad and Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, 16 vols. (incomplete), Dar al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1332/1954, III, 480-82; also see Abu 'Alī al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, Majma' al-Bayān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, Dar Maktabāt al-Hayāt, Beirut, 1380/1961, 12 vols., II, 225

[486] Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, I, 317

[487] Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Hadith No. 393; for more details see al-Bukharī, Vol. VIII, Kitāb al-Da'wāt, 211-81 and also Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, I, 317-20

[488] Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn `Arabī, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Dar al-Andalus, Beirut, 1399/1978, 2 vols., I, 114-15; the translation is from M. M. Mahmud, Ibid I, 195

[489] For definitions of *Hadīth, Sunnah* and difference between *Hadīth Qudsī* and ordinary Hadīth see Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān, Mabāḥith fi `Ulūm al-Hadīth, Maktabah Wahabah, Cairo, 1408/1987, !0-13; Mahmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān, Taysīr Muṣṭaliḥ al-Ḥadīth, Maktabah al-Ma`ārif, Riyadh, 1408/1987, 127; Abd al-Ghanī Abd al-Khāliq, Hujjiyyah al-Sunnah, Dar al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Beirut and International Institute of Islamic Thought, Washington, D.C., 1407/1986, 43-70; also see Zain al-Dīn Abd al-Rahīm ibn Ḥusayn al-`Irāqī, Al-Taqyīd wa al-Īḍāḥ: Sharḥ Muqaddimah al-Ṣalāḥ, edited by Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Uthman, al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, 1389/1969

[490] "Forty Hadith Qudsi" selected and translated by Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, The Holy Koran Publishing House, Beirut, sixth ed., 1411/1990, 78

[491] Al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 4, 499

[492] Translation from Mawdudi, Ibid, IV, 230

[493] Izutsu, Ibid, 196

[494] Ezzeddin Ibrahim and D. Johnson-Davies, An-Nawawī's Forty Hadith, The Holy Koran Publishing House, Beirut, 1990, 68

[495] Afzalur Rahman, Encyclopaedia of Seerah, Vol. 1, 212; for more details of the Qur'anic refutation of polytheism see Ibid, 212-14

[496] L. Gardet, God in Islam, Ibid, 28

[497] The word *ahl al-tawhīd* has ocurred in the Hadīth of Jābir b. `Abdullah. See Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmazī, ed. by M.N. al-Albānī, Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-`Arabī, Gulf States, 1st. ed., 1988/1408, vol. 2, 323 and Sunan al-Timazī, ed. by Aḥmad Shākir, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-`Arabī, Beirut, n.d., Ḥadīth No: 2737. When the Prophet sent Mu'ādh ibn Jabal as governer of Yemen in 9 A.H., he told him, "You will be going to Christians and Jews (*ahl al-Kitāb*), so the first thing you should invite them to is the assertion of the oneness of Allah (*Yuwaḥḥidū Allāh*)." See Saḥīḥ al-Bukharī, translated by M. M. Khan, Maktabah al-Riyāḍ al-Hadīthah, Riyadh, 1981, vol. 9, 348-9, Hadīth No. 469; and Saḥīḥ Muslim, translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, Sh. M. Ashraf publishers, Lahore, Pakistan, 1987, vol. 1, 14-15, Ḥadīth No. 27

[498] For a definition of this science see Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Bayāḍī, Ishārāt al-Marām min `Ibārāt al-Imām, al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, 1949, 28-9; Al-Fārābī, Iḥṣā al-`Ulūm, ed. by `Uthmān Amīn, Injalo al-Māsriyyah ed., Cairo, 1968, 69-70; Al-Ghazālī, al-Munqaz min al-Ḍalāl, ed. by `Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, Cairo, 1962, 132-7; `Aḍad al-Dīn al-Ījī, al-Mawāqif wa Sharḥihī li al-Jurjānī, Constantinople, 1386 A.H., 14-5; Ḥasan al-Shāfʻī, al-Madkhal ilā Dirāsat `Ilm al-Kalām, Idārat al-Qur'ān, Karachi, Pakistan, 1988/1409, 9ff

[499] Abū Ameenah Bilal Philips, The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism), Tawheed Publications, Riyadh, 1990/1410, 1. The Arabic terms used in the quotation are slightly modified to fit in our scheme of transliteration.

[500] M. M. Ali, The Religion of Islam, 144

[501] Very often this division is attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah and his school of thought and many scholars do not take it as a standard. But we see it in its embryonic stage in a number of earlier works. It is not that elaborate as is the case with later theological treatises but its seed is very much visible. See for instance Abū Muḥammad Abdullah b. Abū Zayd al-Qayrawānī (died 386 A.H), Kitāb al-Jāmi' fī al-Sunan wa al-Adāb wa al-Maghāzī wa al-Tārīkh, edited by M. Abū al-Ajfān and Uthmān Baṭṭīkh, Muassassah al-Risālah, Beirut, 1983/1403, 107-110; and also see Ibn Khuzaymah, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, ed. by Muḥammad Khalīl Harās, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, also published by Maktabah al-Kulliyyāt al-'Azhariyyah, Cairo. Here we are adopting it to help us elaborate the point at discussion and not as the standard Islamic expression of the concept of Tawḥīd.

[502] See Al-Iṣfahānī, Ibid, 189; M. Ali, Ibid, 135

[503] Ibid

[504] Mawdūdī, Four Basic Qur'anic Terms, 31-32

[505] Mawdūdī, Ibid, 32-33

[506] Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 2, 542; al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 2, 212; for more details of the creation of the heavens and the earth see Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 2, 542; al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 2, 210-12; al-Qur'an 41:9-12; 21:30-33; and also Maurice Bucaille, The Bible, The Qur'an and Science, 133-149

[507] Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 2, 542; al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 2, 212

[508] Mawdūdī, Towards Understanding the Qur'ān, III, 33

[509] S. Quṭb, Fi Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān, vol. 3, 1297

[510] For scientific implications and explanations of the verse see al-Zindanī, Kitāb Tawḥīd al-Khāliq, 43-53

[511] Keith L. Moore, "Highlights of Human Embryology in the Koran and the Hadith", published by Muslim Students Association of US and Canada, Ottawa, Quebec, n.d., 51

[512] Ibid, 51-2

[513] Ibid, 58

[514] Mawdūdī, Towards Understanding the Qur'ān, III, 239

[515] Mawdūdī, Towards Understanding the Qur'ān, III, 97; for the text of `Ubayy's narration see Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, Vol. 1, 78-80; Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal has narrated the same from `Ubayy and another narration from Ibn Abbās. See his *Musnad*, vol. 5, 135; Bukhari narrates from Anas a hadith that conveys the same meaning. See Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 551; Ibn Kathīr has gathered a number of narrations in this respect. See Ibid, 2, 601-6

[516] Al-Bukhārī, II, Hadith No. 440-41, p:247-48

[517] M. Asad, Ibid, 230

[518] Al-Shawkānī, 2, 262

[519] See Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 605-6;

[520] Mawdūdī, Ibid, III, 98; S. Quṭb, on the other hand, does not deny the possibility of either of the interpretations, see, Ibid, 3, 1393-95

[521] Izutsu, Ibid, 129

[522] See details of differences between these kinds of Tawḥīd in Aḥmad b. `Alī al-Maqrayzī, Tajrīd al-Tawḥīd, Maktaba al-Salām al-`Ālamiyyah, n.d., 5-6

[523] See for more details Aḥmad b. Muhammad b. Alī al-Maqrī al-Fayūmī, al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr fī gharīb al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr li al-Raf`ī, al-Matb`ah al-Amīriyyah, Cairo, 5th ed., 1956; also see Ṭarīq al-Wuṣūl ila al-`ilm al-Ma'mūl bi Ma`rifati al-Qawā`id wa al-Zawābiṭ wa al-Usūl, Mukhtār min Kutub ibn Taymiyyah, edited by Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-sa`dī, Matb`ah al-Imām, Cairo, 12

[524] See Al-Iṣfahānī, Ibid, 330-31; Al-Ẓamakhsharī, Asās al-Balāghah, Matābi` al-Sha`ab, Cairo, 1960; for more details see Mawdūdī, Four Basic Qur'anic Terms, 79-92

[525] Aḥmad b. Ibrahīm b. `Isā al-Sharqī, Sharh Qaṣīdah ibn Qayyam, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, first ed., 1382/1962, Vol. 2, 259; also see Abū Abdullah Muhammad b. Abū Bakr al-Zar`ī al-Damashqī known as Ibn al-Qayyam al-Jawziyyah, Ighāthah al-Lahfān min Maṣāyid al-Shayṭān, edited by Muhammad S. Kaylānī, Matb`ah Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, Cairo, 1381/1961, Vol. 2, 128-29

[526] The translation is from Irving

[527] Abdullah Y. Ali, Ibid 1218

[528] Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, 123

[529] Ibid, 129

[530] Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, 103

[531] Mawdūdī, Ibid, II, 232-33; see details of the strory in Ibn Kathir, Ibid, 3, 530

[532] For instance the issue of the reconstruction of the Holy Shrine *Ka`bah* and how fearful they were in connection with the demolition of the old building when al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah first began to demolish it.. For details of the incident see Abū Muhammad Abd al-Malik b. Hishām b. `Ayyūb al-Hamīrī, al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah known as Sīrah ibn Hishām, Maktabah Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, Cairo, 2nd ed., 1357/1955, Vol. 12, 192-97; Al-Shaikh Muhammad al-Khaḍrī Bik, Muḥāḍrāt Tarīkh al-Umam al-Islāmiyyah, al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, Cairo, 8th ed., 1382 A.H. Vol. 1, 64-65; Muhammad al-Ghazālī, Fiqh al-Sīrah, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, Cairo, 2nd ed., 1375/1955, 62-63

[533] That is why in 9 A.H. Verse (9:28) stopping them from Hajj was revealed. See Ibn Kathir, Ibid, 3, 96; see details in Ibn Hisham, Ibid, 2, 543-546

[534] Ibn al-Kalbī has narrated the formula of Talbiya recited by the pagans of Makka. It said: "*Labbayka allāhumma labbayaka, lā sharīka laka illā sharikun huwa laka, tamilkuhu wa-mā malaka*" ("Here I am, O God, here I am: Thou hast no partner except such partner as Thou hast; Thou possesset him and all that is hi."). Ibn al-Kalbi, Kitab al-Asnam, ed. by Ahmad Zaki Pasha, Cairo, 1343/1924, 7; for a detailed study of this issue see M. J. Kister, Society and Religion from Jāhiliyyah to Islam, Variorum , Gower Publishing Group, Great Britain, and Vermont, USA, 1990, chapter 1 "*Labbaka, Allāhumma, Labbayka...* On a monotheistic aspect of a Jāhiliyyah practice", 33-57

[535] Imam Muslim narrates Abu Zar's words, "I used to observe prayer three years before my meeting with Allah's Messenger". See `Abdul Hamīd Siddīqī, Saḥīḥ Muslim:translation of al-Jāmi` -us-Saḥīḥ, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, Lahore, Pakistan, 1990, IV, 1316

[536] Al-Bukhārī Narrates from Aisha that "Quraish used to fast on the day of `Ashura in the Pre-Islamic period..." Al-Bukhārī, Ibid, III, Hadīth No: 220, page 123; also see Ibn al-Qayyam, Zād al-Ma`ād, edited by Shu`ayb al-Arnūṭ and Abd al-Qādir al-Arnūṭ, Maw`assasah al-Risālah, Beirut, 1402/1982, vol. 2, 67; also see M. J. Kister, Ibid, 34-35

[537] For instance the story of al-Mat`am b. `Addi when he went to tear the contract paper that was hanged with Ka`bah against Banū Hāshim. He found it eaten up by the insects except the word "Bi-ismika Allāhumma" (with your name O Allah). See details Ibn Hisham, Ibid, 1, 350-51 and 374-77; also see Ṣafī al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfūrī, al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm, Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth, Rābitah al-`Ālam al-Islāmī, Makka al-Mukarramah, 1411/1991, 128

[538] For more details see Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dahlawī, Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah, vol. 1, Chapter "What was the situation with the People of Jāhiliyyah"

[539] See for details Akram Ḍiyā al-`Umrī, al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah al-Ṣaḥīḥa, Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariyyah, Qaṭar, 1991, vol. 1, 83ff

[540] Joseph Henninger, "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion" in Marlin L. Swartz (ed.) Studies on Islam, OUP, NY, 1981, 15

[541] M. J. Kister, Ibid, 47-48

[542] F. E. Peters, A Reader On Classical Islam, Princeton UP, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994,39

[543] David Waines, An Introduction to Islam, CUP, NY, 1995, 8-9

[544] Waines, Ibid, 9

[545] K. Armstrong, Muhammad, 62

[546] Armstrong, Ibid, 64; for more details see Islamic sources like Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī, Kitāb al-Aṣnām, edited by Ahmad Zaki Pasha, Cairo, 1927, 9-33; Ibn Hishām, Sīrah, vol. 1, 89-90; al-Bukhārī, VI, 361-63;Sahih Muslim, 644-45, 875-76, 1465, 1506; Muhammad B. Abd al-Wahhāb, Mukhtaṣar Sīrah al-Rasūl, Matba'ah al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah, Cairo, Ist. edition, 1375/1956, 13, 50-54; for modern sources see Shibli Nu'mani, Sirat-un-Nabi, translated by Tayyib B. Budayuni, Kazi Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 1979, vol. 1, 106-110; Haykal, The Life of Muhammad, 18-21 and Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, The Life of Muhammad, Kazi Publications Inc., Chicago, 1991,25-37

[547] Watt, Muhammad At Mecca, 23

[548] See details of their dialogue with Abū Ṭālib, for instance, Ibn Hisham, 1, 265

[549] Armstrong, Ibid, 71

[550] P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, London, 1951, 96

[551] Watt, Ibid, 24; for more details of this phenomenon in Arab culture of that time see Watt, ibid, 24-25; Toshihiko Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an, McGill UP, Montreal, 1966, two chapters IV and V, 55-104

[552] Watt, Ibid, 24

[553] Izutsu, Ibid, 201-2

[554] Izutsu, Ibid, 202; for more details of this attitude see Diwans of various Jahili poets like `Abīd b. al-Abraṣ, Dīwān, Beirut, 1958, XL, v. 20; `Amr b. al-Ṭufayl, Dīwān, Beirut, 1959; `Antarah, Dīwān, edited by `Abd al-Ra'ūf, Cairo, n.d.; al-Ḥamāsah, Dīwān, (al-Marzūqī recention) 4 vols., Cairo, 1951; Imr' al-Qays, Dīwān, edited by Muhammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1958 etc.

[555] P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, London, 1951, 96

[556] Armstrong, Ibid, 110

[557] A. Hameed Siddiqui, Life of Muhammad, 26

[558] Siddiqui, Ibid, 27

[559] Haykal, Ibid, 19-20

[560] Haykal, Ibid, 20

[561] Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, 203

[562] Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 20-21

[563] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 21

[564] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 22-23; here he refers to Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology, UP of Chicago University, 1957, 2, 40

[565] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 23

[566] Al-Fārūqī, Ibid, 24

[567] Abdullah Y. Ali, Ibid, 1724-25

[568] These verses of the Qur'an are extremely significant. The Qur'anic exegets have taken a lot of pain in explaining them and describing their importance. See, for instance, al-Alūsī, Ibid, 14, 62-65; al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 5, 207-9; S. Quṭb, Ibid, 6, 3532-34

[569] See for instance al-Shawkānī, Ibid, 5, 208-9

[570] Al-Bukhārī, 9, Ḥadīth No. 489

[571] See for details Ibn Ḥajar, Fatḥ al-Bārī, 11, 214; for another narration and preference of this meaning by Ibn al-Jawzī, see Ibid, 11, 226; the linguistic usage of the word correspond to these meanings. see Lisān al-`Arab, edited by Yūsuf Khayyāṭ and Nadīm Mar`ashalī, Dār Lisān al-`Arab, Beirut, Ist ed., 1/656

[572] Ibn Ḥajar, Ibid, 11, 226

[573] Ibn al-Qayyam, Badāi` al-Fawā'id, Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, Beirut, vol.1, 164

[574] See al-Tirmazī, Sunan al-Tirmazī, Dār al-Turāth al-`Arabī, Beirut, 5, 530, Hadith No. 3507; though Ibn Hajar, Abu Muhammad b. Hazam and Ibn Attiyyah declare it a weak report. See Fatḥ al-Bārī, 11, 215 and Ibn Ḥajar, Talkhīṣ al-Ḥabīr, Sharikah al-Tibā`ah al-Fanniyyah, Cairo, 4, 172

[575] Abū Muḥammad `Alī b. Aḥmad known as Ibn Hazam al-Zāhirī, al-Maḥallā, edited by Aḥmad Shākir, al-Maktab al-Tijārī, Beirut, vol. 1, 30

[576] Ibn Ḥajar, Fatḥ al-Bārī, 11, 220

[577] Al-Ghazali, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, trans. by David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher, The Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 1992,167

[578] See Ibn Ḥajar, Fatḥ al-Bārī, 11, 220; Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū` Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, compiled by Ibn Qāsim, published by the Goverment of Saudi Arabia, first ed., 1381 A.H., 6, 381; and Ibn al-Qayyam, Badāi` al-Fawā'id, 1, 166

[579] Al-Ghazali, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, 169

[580] Abū Bakr Ibn al-`Arabī, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, Maktabah `īsa al-Bābī, Cairo, 1307/1967, 2, 805; in his book al-Amad he counted 176 see Aḥkām, Ibid

[581] See Muḥammad b. Ismā`īl al-Ṣan`ānī, Subul al-Salām Sharh Bulūgh al-Marām, 4, 143

[582] See Ibn Ḥajar, Fatḥ al-Bārī, 11, 220

[583] See a very good discussion in `Umar S. al-Ashqar, al-Asma` wa-Sifat, Dar al-Nafa'is, Jordon, 1st ed., 1413/1993, 66-79

[584] Al-Ghazali, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, 171

[585] This is only one of the ways to classify the names. There could be several ways to classify them. Al-Ṣan`ānī classified them into four kinds. The only difference between our classification and his classification is that he has further divided the names of essence into "Proper Name" which is Allah and "Negative Names" like al-Quddūs. (See Subul al-Salām, 4, 209). We have modified it a little just for the purpose of convenience. Ibn al-Qayyam divides them into six categories (see Badāi` al-Fawā'id, 1, 160), Ibn Ḥajar into five (see Fatḥ al-Bārī, 11, 223) and scholars of al-Kalām into four. See Gardet, Allah, 33-34; al-Maydānī, Ibid, 155-242; Al-Ghazālī, Kitāb al-Iqtiṣād fi al-I`tiqād, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyay, Beirut, 1403/1983, 19-83 for more details

[586] See Al-Ashqar, Ibid, 89

[587] Al-Ghazālī, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, trans. by David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher, The Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 1992, 51; also see Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan H. al-Maydānī, al-`Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah, Dār al-Qalam, Damasqus, 3rd ed., 1403/1983, 157; for details see H. A. R. Gibb, and A. H. Kramers, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, Cornell UP, NY, Photomechinacal reprint of 1965 Brill's edition, 33

[588] See Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan Āl al-Shaykh, Fatḥ al-Majīd Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Maṭba`ah al-Ḥukūmah, Makka, 1387/1967, 11, M. Yāsīn, al-Īmān, Dār al-Furqān, `Ammān, Jordan, 1405/1985, 35; also see a very scholarly discussion in al-Alūsī, Ibid, vol. 1, 54-58

[589] Al-Ghazālī, The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, 51; see Ibn al-`Arabī, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, 2, 798; Aḥmad al-Sharbāṣī, Mawsū`ah al-Asmā al-Ḥusnā, 1st ed., 1402/1981, 1, 15; Al-Ashqar, Ibid, 86-90 and also see al-Maydānī, Ibid

[590] Al-Ghazālī, Ibid, 51

[591] Ibid, 59; also see al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 37-38; al-Maydānī, Ibid, 197

[592] Al-Ghazālī, Ibid, 60

[593] Ibid, 61; also see al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 35-36

[594] Al-Maydānī, Ibid, 197

[595] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 37

[596] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 37; also see al-Ṣan`ānī, Subul al-Salām, 4, 423-24

[597] S. Murata and W. C. Chittick, The Vision Of Islam, 65

[598] See Al-Ghazālī, Ibid, 102-5

[599] See Ibid, 143

[600] See Ibid, 131

[601] See Ibid, 130-31

[602] See Ibid, 133-34

[603] S. Murata and W. C. Chittick, The Vision Of Islam, 66

[604] The fact the the name al-Raḥmān has been used as the proper name for God in several verses of the Qur'an has led some Orientalists to conclude that "Muhammad derived the formula from South Arabia seems proved..." (Shorter Ency. of Islam, 35). Andrew Rippin in his article "RḤMNN AND THE ḤANĪFS" tries to prove the same. See W. B. Hallaq, Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1991,

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[641] `Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, al-Farq bayn al-Firaq, ed. by M. M. `Abd al-Ḥamīd, Dar al- Ma`rifah, Beirut, 337

[642] See for mor details al-Ashqar, Ibid, 128-34

[643] See Sharḥ al-`Aqīdah al-Taḥāwiyyah, 127-28; the exception is the Mu`tazilites who hold them contingent. See for details on issues like this L. Gardet, "al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā", Ency. of Islam Vol. 1, 714,

[644] See details in al-Ashqar, Ibid, 111

[645] See Ibn al-Qayyam, Ibid, 1, 143 and 163 and Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibid, 8, 94

[646] See details in Fatḥ al-Bārī, 13, 366

[647] See al-Ashqar, Ibid, 115-6

[648] See Sharḥ al-`Aqīdah al-Taḥāwiyyah, 120; Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibid, 4, 6; 5,26

[649] Al-Ghazālī, Ibid, 40

[650] Al-Ghazālī, Ibid, 37

[651] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi` al-Ṣaghīr, al-Maktab al- Islāmī, Beirut, 1st ed., 3, 9; also see Sharḥ al-`Aqīdah al-Taḥāwiyyah, 17

[652] See for how to contemplate upon these names Ibn al-Qayyam, Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa`ādah, Maktabah Ṣabīḥ, Cairo, 2, 90; and al-Ghazālī, Ibid, chapter 4

[653] L. Gardet, "Allāh", Ency. of Islam, 409

[654] Ian R. Netton, Allāh Transcendent, Routledge, London and NY, 1989, 22

[655] K. Cragge, The House of Islam, 7

[656] Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 24-5; also see his artical "Islam and Art," Studia Islamica, Fasciculi xxxvii, 1973, 81-109; and his "Misconceptions of the Nature of the Work of Art in Islam", Islam and the Modern Age, Vol. 1, No. 1 (May, 1970); and his "On the Nature of Art in Islam", Islam and the Modern Age, Vol. 1, No. 2, (August, 1976); and his "Divine Transcendence and Its Expression," in World Faiths, 17 (Spring 1979); S. H. Nasr, Islamic Art and Spirituality, SUNY, Albany, 1987, chapters 1-3; also see T. Burckhardt, The Art of Islam, trans. by P. Hobson, London, 1976; N. Ardalan and L. Bakhtiar, The Sense of Unity- The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture, Chicago, 1973; T. W. Arnold, Painting in Islam, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1928; Richard Ettinghausen, The Characted Of Islamic Art in The Arab Heritage, ed. by N. A. Faris, PUP, Princeton, 1944;

[657] Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 25-6

[658] See Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 25-32; Nasr, Ibid, chapter v-viii; for another interesting mystical view see F. Schuon, From the Divine to the Human, trans. by G. Polit and D. Lambert, Bloomington, (Indiana), 1982 and his Logic and Transcendence, trans. by P. Townsend, NY, 1975

[659] Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 3

[660] Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 14; I am heavily indebted to Al-Fārūqī in aspect of al-Tawḥīd's discussion. See for details Ibid, 9-16

[661] Fazlur Rahman, Ibid, 1

[662] Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, 75

[663] See al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 39-48

[664] See al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 61-102

[665] Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, 33

[666] See for details Al-Fārūqī, Al-Tawḥīd, chapter VI;

[667] See John E. Kelsay's doctroal thesis titled "Religion and Morality in Islam", University of Virginia, Chalottesville, 1985; F. Carney, "Some Aspects of Islamic Ethics", Journal of Religion, 63/2 (1983), 159-74; R. M. Frank, "Moral Obligation in Classical Muslim Theology", Journal of Religious Ethics, 11/2 (1983), 204-23; for a general study Paul Helm (ed.), Divine Commands and Moral Requirements, OUP, 1981; M. G. S. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, Chicago UP, Chicago, 1974, Vols. 1-2; J. M. Idziak (ed.), Divine Command Theory, Mellen Press, NY, 1979; W. Madelung, "Early Sunni Doctrine Concerning Faith", Studia Islamica, 32 (1970), 233-54; Fazlur Rahman, "Some Key Ethical Concepts of the Qur'ān",Journal of Religious Etics, 11/2 (1983), 170-85; and A. K. Reinhart, "Islamic Law as Islamic Ethics", Journal of Religious Ethics, 11/2 (1983), 186-203; Majid Khadduri, The Islamic Conception of Justice, The John Hopkin UP, Baltimore, 1984

[668] See for details Fazlur Rahman, Ibid, chapters 1-3

[669] See details in Murata and Chittick, Ibid, 48-9

[670] See for details Khurshid Ahmad (ed.), Islam, Its Meaning and Message, The Islamic FoundationLeicester, 1980, Part III"The Islamic System" 101-173; Mawdūdī, Towards Understanding Islam, International Islamic

Federation of Students Organizations, 119-30; Suzanne Haneef, What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims, Library of Islam Des Plaines, IL, 1993, 33-38

671 See for details Fazlur Rahman, Ibid, chapters 1-3

672 See for details al-Shāṭabī, al-Muwafqāt fī 'Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah, al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, Cairo, 3rd ed., 1975, 3, 118; Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Risālah al-Tadummuriyyah, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beirut, 109; Maḥmūd Shaltūt, al-Islām `Aqīdah wa Sharī`ah, Dār al-Qalam, Cairo, 1966, 29; M. Quṭb, Mazāhib Fikriyyah Mu`āṣarah, Dār al-Sharq, Beirut, 1st ed., 1983, 13

673 This verse has been interpreted in two ways. Many scholars make a stop at "no one knows its true meanings except Allāh" while, others, especially rationalists like Mu`tazilah, pause at "no one knows its true meanings except Allāh and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge", implying permission for speculations about and allegorical interpretations of these verses. See Abū Muḥammad `Abd al-Ḥaqq b. `Aṭiyya, al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-`Azīz, ed. by `Abdullah b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Āl and M. al-Shāf`i, The Government of Qatar Edition, 1982/1402, 3, 24; al-Kashshāf, Dār al-Ma`rifah, Beirut edition, 1, 175-6; al-Jalālayn, 43

674 See various books of tafsir in regards to this phrase. For instance see al-Alūsī, Ruh, 2, 46; al-Shawkānī, Fatḥ, 4, 189; Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 4, 415

675 See Ibn Kathīr, 4, 415; al-Alūsī, Ibid, 11, 130-1

676 Ibn Ḥazam, al-Fiṣal, Maktabah al-Salām al-`Ālamiyyah, Cairo, 2, 127

677 Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 301

678 Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 301

679 Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 302

680 Ibid, 305

681 Ibid, 309

682 Netton, Allāh Transcendent, 2

683 See H. A. R. Gibb, Studies on the Civilization of Islam, ed. by S. J. Shaw and W. R. Polk, Beacon Press, Boston, 1962, 196ff; the fact that Islamic law was developed before theology is an indication of that. See also `Alī Muṣṭafā al-Ghurābī, Tārīkh al-Firaq al-Islāmiyyah wa Nash'at `Ilm al-Kalām `ind al-Muslimīn, Maṭba`ah al-Sa`ādah, Cairo, 1934, 5ff

684 See Hitti, A Short History of Arabs; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fī Tārīkh, Cairo, 1303-1318/1885-1900; Arnold, Preaching of Islam; al-Fārūqī, Cultural Itlas, chapter 10, 202-29

685 See al-Suyūṭī, Ṣawn al-Manṭiq, 48ff; Ibn Hishām, Sīrah, 2/571; Ibn Kathīr, 4, 62; al-Bukhārī, Chapter on Tafsīr; Yaḥya Ḥāshim Ḥasan Farghal, Nash'at al-'Ārā' wa al-Madhāhib wa al-Firaq al-Islāmiyyah, Maṭbū`āt Majma`ah al-Buḥūth, Cairo, 1972; Yaḥya Huwaydī, Dirāsāt `Ilm al-Kalām wa al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah, Dār al-Thaqāfah, Cairo, 3rd ed., n.d.

686 See al-Suyūṭī, Ṣawn al-Manṭiq, 17

687 `Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, al-Tafkīr al-Falsafī fī al-Islām, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Cairo, 1984, 88-93; also see Aḥmad b. `Ali al-Maqrayzī, al-Khiṭaṭ wa al-Āthār, Maṭba`ah al-Nīl, Cairo, 1325 A.H., 4, 180ff; Ibn Khuldūn, Muqadimah (Arabic), al-Ṭab`ah al-Tijāriyyah, Cairo, n.d., 463; al-Shāṭbī, al-I`tiṣām, Cairo, 1331 A.H., 2, 191

688 See Ibrāhīm Madkūr, Fī al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Cairo, 1976, 2, 24ff; also see Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Alūsī, Dirāsāt fī al-Fikr al-Falsafī al-Islāmī, al-Mu'assasah al-`Arabiyyah, Beirut, 1980, 72-3

689 See Tāhā Ḥusayn, al-Fitnah al-Kubrā, `Alī wa Banūh, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Cairo, 1961

690 See Ibn `Asākar,Tahzīb Tārīkh, al-Maktabah al-`Arabiyyah, Damsqus, 1st. ed. n.d., 1/299; Muḥammad b. al-Murtaḍā, Īthār al-Haq `alā al-Khalq, Maṭba`ah al-Adāb wa al-Mu'ayyid, Cairo, 1318 A.H., 97 also see his Tabaqāt al-Mu`tazilah, Beirut, 1971/1380; al-Isfarā'īnī, al-Tabṣīr, 144; Abū Na`īm al-Iṣfahānī, Ḥilyat al-'Aawliyā wa Tabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā, Maṭba`ah al-Sa`ādah, Cairo, 1932/1351, 72-3; al-Baghdādī, al-Firaq, 17; for a detailed study of `Ali's treatment of such issues see Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah, Dar al-Kitab al-Kubra, Cairo, n.d.

691 See al-Kashshī, Rijāl al-Kashshī; al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, 144; al-Shahristānī, al-Milal, 2, 11; Ibn `Asākar, Tahzīb, 7, 430. The Shī`ah scholar Murtaḍā al-`Askarī doubts the historical existence of Ibn Sabā. He argues that most of the reports about him are narrated by Ṭabrī through Saif b. `Umar al-Tamīmī (d. 170 A.H.). Saif, to al-`Askarī, was not an authentic narrator. Therefore, to him, Ibn Sabā was a mythical figure created by later historians to blame Shiism of these developments. See Murtaḍā al-`Askarī , `Abdullah b. Sabā, Najaf, Iran, 1956. This is refuted by the Shī`ah scholars themselves. See for instance al-Kashshī, Ibid; al-Ḥillī, Kitāb al-Rijāl,

Tehran, 1383 A.H., 469; al-Ṭūsī, Rijāl al-Ṭūsī, Najaf, 1961, 51; `Abbās al-Qummī, Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb, 184; M. Taqī al-Tasattarī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, Tehran, 1379 A.H., 463. Among the non-Shī`ah, it is Ṭāhā Ḥusayn who doubts Ibn Sabā's existence. See his al-Fitnah al-Kubrā, 90

692 Muslim Sects and Divisions, The Section on Muslim Sects in Kitab al-Milal wa al-Nihal by Shahrastani, trans by A. K. Kazi and J.G. Flynn, Kegan Paul International, London, 1984, 150; al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal, (Arabic), 2, 11,; also see Ibn `Asākar, Tahzīb, 7, 430; al-Isfarā'īnī, al-Tabṣīr, 105

693 See Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq al-Shī`āh, Matba`ah Istanbawl, 1931, 41-2; al-Maqrayzī, al-Khiṭaṭ, 2, 256-7

694 al-Maqrayzī, Ibid; al-Shahristānī, Ibid

695 See details in al-Isfarā'īnī, Ibid; al-Baghdādī, Ibid

696 See Matti Moosa, Extremist Shiites, The Ghulat Sects, Syracuse UP, NY, 1988

697 See for details on these sects and their beliefs al-Shahristānī, Ibid, 1, 173-88; al-Ash`arī, Maqalāt, 106ff

698 See al-Ash`arī, Ibid. It should be mentioned here that Hishām b. al-Ḥakam argued that God is "a body but not like bodies" (Maqālāt, 106) and Hisham al-Jawaliqi argued that God does not have "flesh and blood like us". (Maqālāt,108)

699 Al-Shahrastānī, Ibid, 1, 155; al-Rāzī, I`taqādāt Firaq al-Muslimīn, 96; al-Isfarā'īnī, Ibid, 144; al-Ghurābī, Ibid, 315-16; al-Nashshār, Ibid, 1, 46-47 and al-Nashshār and al-Sharbīnī, al-Fikr al-Yahūdī wa ta'ththurih bi al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah, Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1972, 32; S. Mukhtār, Ibid; Fatḥī M. al-Zaghī, Ghulāt al-Shī`ah, Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyyah, 1988, 410-16

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702 See Maqalāt, 107; al-Shahrastānī, Ibid, 43ff

703 See Ibn Khalkān, Ibid, 2, 147; Ibn Sa`ad, Ṭabaqāt, 7, 105; Dhahabī argues that he died even before 150 A.H. See Mīzān al-I`tadāl, Tab`ah Īsā al-Bābī, Cairo, 3, 196

704 Matti Moosa, Ibid, 69-70; also see Kazi and Flynn, Ibid, 150-1

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706 Kazi and Flynn, Ibid, 78

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709 See al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, 17

710 See for details Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balāwazarī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, ed. by Ḥamīdullah, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Egypt, n.d., 2, 241; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Maṭba`ah al-Sa`ādah, Egypt, 1965/1384, 9, 350

711 See details in Ibn Kathīr, Ibid ; al-Dhahbī, Mīzān al-I`tidāl, 1, 426. For a detailed study see Khālid al-`Aslaī, Jaham B. Ṣafwān, Baghdād, 1965

712 See al-Dhahbī, Mīzān al-I`tidāl, (Cairo ed. 1907), 3, 183; Ṭāsh Kubrīzādah, Miftāḥ al-Sa`ādah, Dār al-Kutub al-`Arabiyyah, Egypt, n.d., 2, 32; al-Maqrayzī, Ibid, 4, 191

713 See Ibn al-Murtaḍa, Ṭabaqāt al-Mu`tazilah, 25

714 Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah, 9, 350

715 Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Risalāh al-Ḥamawiyyah, 15; Muwafaqat Ṣarīḥ al-Ma`qūl, 1, 192; al-Kawtharī, Muqaddamah Tabyīn, 12; al-Dārmī, al-Radd `ala al-Jahmiyyah, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1982, 7; Ibn al-`Imād, Shazarāt, 1, 169

716 Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah, Ibid; also see Ibn Nubātah al-Maṣrī, Sarḥ al-`Uyūn Sharḥ Risālah Ibn Zaydūn, Ṭab`ah al-Iskandariyyah, n.d., 162-3

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[723] Maqālāt, 161; al-Malaṭṭī, Ibid, 193;
[724] Kitāb al-Radd `ala al-Jahmiyyah, 12
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[729] Kazi and Flynn, Ibid, 73
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901 Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibid, 5, 330

902 Ibid, 5, 349

903 See Minhāj, Ibid; Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww, 42; Majmū` Fatāwā, 5, 478ff

904 Majmū` Fatāwā, 5, 243

905 See for details Majmū` Fatāwā, 5, 353ff

906 See Gibb, Ibid

907 See Ibn al-Qayyam, Ijtimā` al-Juyūsh al-Islāmiyyah, Maṭba`ah al-Qur'ān wa al-Sunnah, Amar Tasar, India; al-Ṣawā`iq al-Mursalah `alā al-Jahmiyyah wa al-Mu`aṭṭalah, Matba`ah al-Imam, Cairo; I`lām al-Mawqi`ayn `an Rabb al-`Ālamīn, Dār al-Jīl,

908 Watt, Ibid, 164

909 See Abū Zahrah, Ibn Taymiyyah, 273; also see Abū al-Mu`īn al-Nasafī, Baḥr al-Kalām, Cairo, 1922, 5; Ibn Rushd, Manāhij al-Adillah, 171; Abū Bakr Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥuṣnī, Daf`u Shubah man Shabbaha wa Tamarrada wa Nasaba dhālik ilā al-Imām Aḥmad, al-Ḥalbī, Cairo, 1350 A.H., 16

910 Ibn Ḥazm, Ibid, 1, 166

911 See Abū al-Falāḥ Ibn al-`Aimād al-Ḥanbalī, Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab, Cairo, 1350 A.H., 4/ 7-8, 3, 306; Abū Zahrah, Ibid, 273;

912 See Ibn `Aqīl, Kitāb al-Funūn, Beirut, 1970-1971, 1, 30ff

913 See Abū al-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn `Abd al-Raḥmān b. `Alī, Dafa` Shubha al-Tashbīh, ed. by al-Kawtharī, al-Maktabah al-Tawfīqiyyah, Cairo, n.d., 8; also his Talbīs Iblīs, al-Maṭba`ah al-Munīriyyah, Cairo, n.d.

914 Ibid, 8

915 Al-Bayhaqī, Kitāb al-Asmā, ed. by M. Z. al-Kawtharī, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, Beirut, n.d., 397

916 Abū Bakar Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, Kitāb al-Tamhīd, ed. by Yūsuf al-Yasū`ī, al-Maktabah al-Sharqiyyah, Beirut, 1957, see chapter on *tawḥīd*, chapter on *al-ism wa al-musammā; also see* al-Inṣāf fī mā yajibu I`tiqāduh wa lā yajūz al-Jahal bih, ed. by `Izzat al-Husaynī, Damscus, 1950/1369

917 See Abū al-Ḥasan `Alī al-Ash`arī, al-Ibānah `an Usūl al-Diyānah, ed. by M. al-Khaṭīb, al-Maṭba`ah al-Salafiyyah, Cairo also ed. by Fawqiyyah Ḥ. Maḥmūd, Dār al-Anṣār, Cairo, 1977; and Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn, ed. by M. `Abd al-Ḥamīd, Al-Ḥikmah, Beirut, 1994/1415; Kitāb al-Lum`a, ed. by Father MaCarthy, Beirut, 1953 and Risālah fī Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fī al-Kalām, Beirut, 1953, see for English translation The Theology of al-Ash`ari: The Arabic Texts of al-Ash`ari's "Kitab al-Luma`" and "Risālat Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fī `Ilm al-Kalām", with briefly annotated trans. by Richard J. maCarthy, Imprimerie Catholique, Beirut, 1953

918 Al-Rāzi, Asās al-Taqdīs, Ṭab`ah Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kurdī, 223

919 See details in Watt, Islamic Philosophy, 84-85

920 Watt, Ibid, 85

921 Al-Ibānah, 8-9

922 Wensinck, Ibid, 90; Goldziher, Introduction to Islamic Theology, 105

923 Goldziher, Ibid, 104-5

924 Watt, Islamic Philosophy, 85; also see H. al-Shāf`i, Ibid, 80; Madkūr, Ibid, 2, 50

925 Kazi and Flynn, Ibid, 85

926 Goldziher, Ibid, 104 ff

927 Ibid, 80; al-Milal, 1, 95

928 Al-Ibānah, 43

929 See Ibid, 45

930 See Maqālāt, 109-10

931 Watt, I. Philosophy, 86

932 Wensinck, Ibid, 92

933 Goldziher, Ibid, 105

934 Ibid, 105-6

935 See for instance Abū al-Qāsim `Abd al-Malik b. `Isā b. Darbās, Risālat fī al-Dhab `an Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash`arī, ed. by `Alī al-Faqīhī, Beirut, 1984/1404, 115-28

936 Fatāwā, 5, 90ff

937 See his commentary on Ibn `Asākar's Tabyīn Kadhb al-Muftrā, Maktabah Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Subkī, 28

938 Wensinck, Ibid, 92-3

939 Kazi and Flynn, Ibid, 85; al-Milal, 1, 101

940 See his commentary on Ibn `Asākar's Tabyīn Kadhb al-Muftrā, Maktabah Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Subkī, 28 also published by Maṭba`ah al-Tawfīq, Damascus, 1374 and Muqaddimah Tabyīn published by Nashr al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah, 1949; also see Maqālāt al-Kawtharī, Maṭba`ah al-Anwār, Cairo

941 Armstrong, History of God, 166-67

942 Watt, Early Islam, 89-90

943 Armstrong, Ibid, 167

944 Ibid, 93

945 See al-Ibānah, 40ff

946 Ibid, 45

947 A. Rippin, Muslims, 1, 70

948 His article :Attributes of God: Islamic Concept" in E. of Religion, Macmillan and Free Press, 1987, 1, 516

949 al-Inṣāf, 41

950 Ibid, 41-2

951 Ibid, 25

952 Ibid, 24

953 See another contemporary of al-Bāqillanī who was likewise an Ash`arī: Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Isfrā'inī, al-Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn, Maktabah al-Khānjī, Cairo, 1955

[954] For opposite view about *ta'wīl* see `Umar al-Ashqar, al-Ta'wīl: Khuṭūratuhū wa Āthāruh, Dār al-Nafā'is, `Ammān, Jorden, 1992/1412; Ibn al-Qayyam, Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawā`iq, 1, 21ff

[955] Watt, Early Islam, 90

[956] Giib, Mohammedanism, 79

[957] `Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, al-Farq bayn al-Firaq, Tab`at al-Sayyid `Izzat al-`Attār al-Husaynī, 1948/1367

[958] Sa`ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid fī `ilm al-Kalām, Lahore, Pakistan, 1st. ed., 1401 A.H.; and Sharḥ al-`Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah, Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-`Arabiyyah, Cairo

[959] See his Kitāb al-Irshād, ed. and trans. by Jean Dominique, Paris, 1938

[960] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtiṣād fī al-I`tiqād, Maktabah al-Ḥasan al-Tijāriyyah, Cairo; Kitāb aljām al-`Awām `an `ilm al-Kalām, Maktabah al-Munīriyyah, Cairo, 1933; al-Munqadh min al-Dalāl, Cairo, 1934; Fayṣal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Islām wa al-Zandiqah, ed. by Sulaymān Dunyā, Cairo, 1961

[961] M. `Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, al-Ḥalbi, Cairo, 1968/1387; and Nihāyah al-Aqdām, ed. by al-Farīd Kayūm, Maktabah al-Mathnā, Baghdad

[962] Fakhar al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1978; Asās al-Taqdīs, Maṭba`ah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī, Cairo, 1935; I`tiqādāt Firaq al-Muslimīn wa al-Mushrikīn, Maktabah al-Nahḍah, Cairo, 1938/1356; Kitāb al-Arba`īn fī Usūl al-Dīn, Haydar Abād, India, 1935

[963] Watt, Early Islam, 90

[964] See details in al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtiṣād, 53-73; M. `Abduh, The Theology of Unity, 45-56

[965] Madkūr, Ibid, 2, 55-6; also see Ḥ. al-Shāf`ī, Ibid, 81

[966] See al-Jurjānī, Ta`rīfāt, Cairo, 1283 A.H.

[967] Watt, Early Islam, 90

[968] Rippin, Ibid, 71

[969] Kitāb al-Iqtiṣād fī al-I`tiqād, Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1983/1403, 36; also see his Iljām al-`Awām which was specifically written for this purpose.

[970] Ibid, 36

[971] Ibid, 36-41; also see Iljām al-`Awām, 7 where gives example of "*ṣūrah*" in connection with God.

[972] Watt, Early Islam, 91

[973] See for definition of `*ta'wīl*' in Abū al-Walīd Ibn Rusd, Faṣl al-Maqāl fī mā bayn al-Ḥakmat wa al-Sharī`at min al-ittiṣāl, Dār al-Ma`ārif, Cairo, 2nd. ed., 1983, 32-3; al-Rāzī, Asās al-Taqdīs, 182; Irfān, Ibid, 219-24

[974] Ibid, 91-2

[975] Ibid, 93

[976] See Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, 4, 56;

[977] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 312-4

[978] Ibid, ed. by al-Kawtharī, 395

[979] Ibn Ḥazam, al-Fiṣal, 2, 127-28

[980] That is what is attributed to Ibn `Abbās. See Tanwīr al-Miqbās min tafsīr ibn `Abbās, Intisharāt Istiqlāl, Nāṣir Khusraw, Tehran, 1st ed., 97; also see Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn `Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, Tafsīr al-Jalālayn, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 97

[981] See Ibn `Abbās, Ibid, 432; Tafsīr al-Jalālayn, 431; Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 322

[982] See for instance 7:11; 15:28-29

[983] See al-Alūsī, Ibid, 12, 225-26; see details in Ibn Forak, Mushkal al-Ḥadīth, 102-119

[984] Abū al-Ḥasan `Alī al-Ash`arī, al-Ibānah `an Usūl al-Diyānah, ed. by M. al-Khaṭīb, al-Maṭba`ah al-Salafiyyah, Cairo, 43

[985] See a good discussion in al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 319-20; al-Alūsī, Ibid, 12, 225-26

[986] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, (al-Kawtharī's ed.) 401

[987] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 3314-323; also see Abū Ismā`īl al-Harwī, Kitāb al-Arba`īn fī dalā'il al-Tawḥīd, edited by `Alī b. Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Faqīhī, Lebanon, 1st. ed., 1984/1404, 67-72

[988] Ibn al-Qayyam and al-Bayhaqī refute the *ḥadīth* narrated by `Urwah b. Rawīm specifying that Adam's creation was different from the rest of creation with the commandment "Be". They argue that this `Urwah, who narrates this report from Jābir b. `Abdullah al-Anṣārī, never had the opportunity to see or learn from Jābir as he

died before him. This in addition to a number of other inauthentic reporters in the chain like `Abd Rabbih b. Ṣāliḥ and Hishām b. `Ammār. See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 317

[989] Also see 69:44-47; see al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 331

[990] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 331; al-Alūsī, Ibid,13, 26

[991] see detailed interpretations of suh reports in ibn Forak, Mushkal, 102-119

[992] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 331-3; Ibn Forak, Ibid

[993] See Goldziher's comments, Ibid, 107

[994] Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi's translation, IV, 1397; also see al-Harwi, Ibid, 75; al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 340. Al-Ḥāfiz `Alī b. `Umar al-Dārquṭnī has colleted most of the *aḥādīth* in connection with attributes of God in his book Kitāb al-Ṣifāt, ed.by `Abdullah al-Ghunaymān, Maktabah al-Dār, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, S.A., 1st. ed, 1402 A.H.; also see Abū Ismā`īl al-Harwī, Kitāb al-Arba`īn fī Dalāil al-Tawḥīd, ed. by `Alī b Muḥammad al-Faqīhī, Madinah, 1984/1404

[995] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 340

[996] Ibn Ḥazm, al-Fiṣal, 2, 128

[997] Al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Maktabah al-Riyāḍ al-Ḥadīthah, al-Riyāḍ, 15, 204

[998] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 6, 317-8; also M. M. Khan and M. T. al-Hilālī, The Noble Qur'an, 7, 123-4

[999] See for more details al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 333-48

[1000] Ibn Forak, Mushkal, 240

[1001] See al-Iqtiṣād, 36-37

[1002] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 6, 353; also see al-Harawī, Ibid, 76-77; al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 348-61; for different narrations of the Ḥadīth see al-Dārquṭnī, Kitāb al-Ṣifāt, 11-17

[1003] Goldziher, Ibid, 108

[1004] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 352

[1005] Al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 18, 183

[1006] See for more discussion of this and other reports specially the one talking about "the Chair (*kursī*) being the place of His two feet", in al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 352-61. Al-Bayhaqī discusses the inauthentic nature of that report on page 354.

[1007] Abū Bakr b. Forak, Mushkal al-Ḥadīth wa Bayānuh, ed. by Mūsā Muḥammad `Alī, `Ālam al-Kutub, Beirut, 2nd. ed., 1985/1405,131

[1008] Goldziher, Ibid, 109

[1009] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 361; Ibn Ḥazm, Ibid

[1010] See al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 448; for a literal or "*Salafi*" interpretation see Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww, 24, 69-78

[1011] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 2, 136, Ḥadīth No. 246

[1012] See al-Iqtiṣād, 39-40

[1013] Ibid, 40

[1014] See Ibn Forak, Ibid, 199-211; and al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 450-1

[1015] H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, Cornell UP, NY, 1965, "Tashbīh", 583

[1016] Goldziher, Ibid, 107-8

[1017] See details in al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 457-61

[1018] Ibn Taymiyyah, al-`Aqīdah al-Ḥamawiyyah, 414; also see Ibid, 124; Al-Munaẓirah fī al-`Aqīdah al-Wāsṭiyyah, 402

[1019] See Ibn Taymiyyah, Sharḥ Ḥadīth al-Nuzūl; and Shams al-Dīn Abū Abdullah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Zahabī, Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww li al-`Aliyy al-Ghaffār, edited by M. Nāṣir al-Albānī, al-Maktab al-Islāmi, Beirut, 1st ed., 1981/1401, 115

[1020] Majmū` Fatāwā, 5, 578

[1021] Ibid, 579

[1022] See more details in Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww, 191ff

[1023] See details in al-Alūsī, Ibid, 9, 153-61

[1024] See details of reports about the issue in Muḥammad b. `Uthmān b. Abī Shaybah (d. 297 A.H.), Kitāb al-`Arsh wa mā ruwiya fīhā, ed. by Muḥammad b. Ḥamd al-Ḥumūd, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1991/1411; and Muwaffaq al-Dīn `Abdullah b. Aḥmad b. Qudamah al-Maqdasī, Ithbāt al-Uluww, ed. by Badar b. `Abdullah al-Badar, al-Dār al-Salafiyyah, al-Kuwayt, 1st. ed., 1986/1406; and al-Dhahbī, Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww

[1025] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 408
[1026] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 408-9
[1027] See Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibid; Ibn Qudamah, Ibid; and al-Dhahbī, Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww
[1028] Al-Ibānah, 37
[1029] See details in al-Alūsī, Ibid, 9, 159; and al-Dhahbī, Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww,
[1030] Al-Dhahbī, Mukhtaṣar al-`Uluww, 49ff
[1031] See Fatāwā, 5, 578ff; `Abdullah al-Sabat, al-Raḥmān `alā al-`Arsh Istawā, al-Dār al-Salafiyyah, Kuwait, 1978/1398, 37-8; Ibn Qudāmah, Ithbāt Ṣifat al-`Uluww, ed. by Badar b. A. al-Badar, al-Dār al-Salafiyyah, Kuwait, 1986/1406; Ibn al-Qayyam, Muktaṣar al-Ṣawā`iq, 2, 366ff
[1032] Al-Iqtiṣād, 35; Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn, `Ālam al-Kutub, Damascus, n.d., 95
[1033] Al-Iqtiṣād, 35, 38; for more details see al-Bayhaqi, 405-15; also al-Bayḍāwī, on chapter 7:52-54; Gatje, The Qur'ān and its Exegesis, 149
[1034] Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn, `Ālam al-Kutub, Damascus, n.d., 92
[1035] M. Ali, The Religion of Islam, 156
[1036] Al-Bukhārī, VIII, 160; Ibn Forak has brought all the other narrations of this report and interpreted them metaphorically. See his Mushkal al-Ḥadīth, 45-65
[1037] See Ibn Forak, Ibid, 67
[1038] Ibn Forak, Ibid, 67
[1039] See his Daf`a Shubah al-Tashbīh, 60; Ibn Forak, Ibid, 67-8
[1040] Abū Muḥammad Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad Al-`Aynī, `Umdat al-Qārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Maṣtafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbī, 1972/1392, 1st. ed., vol. 18, 284; al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 290; see Watt, "Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology", in Early Islam, 94-95
[1041] Al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 290; Watt, 95
[1042] Ibn Forak, Ibid, 50ff
[1043] Watt, Early Islam, 95
[1044] Goldziher, Ibid, 108
[1045] Al-Bayhaqī, 291; Watt, Ibid, 96
[1046] Al-`Aynī, Ibid, 284; Al-Bayhaqī, 291; Watt, Ibid, 96
[1047] See Ibn Forak for details, 62ff
[1048] See Ibn Khuzaymah and al-Kawtharī's comments about this report in al-Bayhaqī, Ibid, 371
[1049] Watt, Ibid, 99
[1050] Watt, Ibid, 99; Al-`Aynī, Ibid, 284;
[1051] Watt, Ibid, 100; for more details of the argument see Al-Bayhaqī, 289
[1052] A. H. Maḥmūd, al-Tafkīr al-Falsafī, 98-106; and his al-Islām wa al-`Aql, Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1988, 128-29
[1053] Majmū` Fatāwā, 5, 108
[1054] See al-Ash`arī, Maqālāt, 106;
[1055] W. Madelung, Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam, 122
[1056] Watt, Early Islam, 100
[1057] Shorter EI, 34
[1058] Netton, Allāh Transcendent, 22
[1059] See his al-Tawḥīd, 27
[1060] Watt, Ibid, 93
[1061] Netton, Allāh Transcendent, 27-8
[1062] Ibid, 331-32; unless Netton meant from the term that our language about God is always inadequate and imperfect.

Conclusions

1: The Hebrew Bible's concept of the Deity is through and through anthropomorphic. The God Paradigm presented by the data of the Hebrew Bible is not consistent. Polar tendencies are quite visible. The concept of divine transcendence is there, but is not systematically presented, clearly elaborated, and completely safeguarded against possible misconceptions, mis-interpretations, exploitations, and violence. It is very much scattered throughout the Bible. One has to sift through a great many contradictory statements, assertions, information, and face thorny problems to derive a concept of the absolute otherness and transcendence of God from the text of the Hebrew Bible itself. It could not be done satisfactorily without external help.

An anthropomorphic concept of the Deity is strikingly evident. Anthropomorphic descriptions of God, anthropomorphic attributes, qualities, and portrayals are so pervasive in the text that a cursory reader can determine that the God of the Hebrew Bible is undoubtedly anthropomorphic. Many of the biblical anthropomorphisms are naive, at times concrete, and are not essentially needed for the sort of modality intrinsic to proper religious communication except for the type of religious understanding which hold God as absolutely anthropomorphic. God is presented as a body, walking, talking, searching after somebody, weeping and crying, resting, wrestling, repenting, lamenting, in certain incidents lacking power, knowledge, mercy, justice, impartiality, universality; i.e., the basic traits of a transcendent God. On the other hand, many human limitations, qualities, and categories are ascribed to him that he often appears like a human being but of a higher rank or gigantic proportion. Many of these passages can be interpreted metaphorically, but a great majority of them would not render to such an interpretation without violence to the text. At times it seems like that man is creating God in his own image and form. Consequently, that image quite often suffers the finitude of its creator.

2: The Hebrew Bible's God Paradigm seems to be progressive and evolutionary. The later Prophet's conception of God, specially the one's after the 8th century B.C., is more elaborate, systematic, and unified than the earlier writings but not necessarily non-corporeal or non-anthropomorphic. It is as much anthropomorphic as the earlier writings but in a different way. The anthropomorphic expressions are, to certain degrees, refined and at times convey a sense of mystical experience or reflection. Many of them render to metaphorical interpretations more easily than their counterparts in the so-called books of Moses and other earlier writings. Still they convey nothing less than the concept of an anthropomorphic deity.

3: The traditional Rabbinic mind is very close to the Bible God Paradigm. There are times when the Rabbinic God seems more anthropomorphic, familiar, and bound than the God of the Hebrew Bible is.

4: The philosophical and transcendental thinking, in the sense of non-corporealism or non-anthropomorphism, had been looked upon (by the Jewry at large) as non-Biblical. Such an understanding of God had not been very popular in Jewish tradition over the centuries following the Rabbinic period.

5: It is not hard to determine the human aspect of the anthropomorphic Biblical passages. Human creativity seems to play a vital role in the creation of these anthropomorphically oriented, and at times immorally tuned, passages of the Hebrew Bible. This human aspect, ignored over the centuries, has been highlighted by many biblical scholars since the 19th century. It has almost become a standard explanation, particularly in academic circles, of many theological, moral and religious difficulties presented by the text of the Hebrew Bible.

6: It has become impossible to logically prove or rationally substantiate the traditional claims of the Hebrew Bible being the inerrant Word of God verbatim. Modern critical scholarship looks at it as the word of man or at the best as an indirect inspiration with Word of God mixed up with human word. The presence of a fanciful jungle of allegorical interpretations, violence over the centuries against the text of the Hebrew Bible and specially polar and contradictory tendencies about the Deity are not proofs of the depths and infinite mysteries of these problematic passages but the other way around. All of these problems, wittingly or unwittingly confessed by almost all biblical scholars, prove the point that the Hebrew Bible in its present shape and form cannot be taken as the inerrant Word of God.

7: The New Testament seems to be far removed from the Hebraic universe of discourse and very close to the Greek one. It is not theocentric. It is Christocentric. There are a greater variety of theologies (Christologies) presented in the New Testament than the variety one notices in the Old Testament and not all of them are mutually congruent. They are more problematic, divergent and mutually dissonant.

8: It is not what Jesus said and wrote about himself, and probably not even what he understood about himself. It is what the Church and later Christians understood and interpreted that he was or should have been.

9: The traditional Christian Incarnational theology is a result of centuries later reflections and developments and is not necessarily what the text of the New Testament presents. It is not clearly charted out in the New Testament in its developed, traditional, literal sense, and cannot be proved as the essence of the New Testament writings as a whole without external intrusions. It could possibly be construed from some of these writings but not without superficial efforts and violence to the text on the part of the one who intends to do so.

10: The Incarnational theology, especially in its literal sense, is absolutely corporeal and anthropomorphic. It is practically impossible to separate the divine from the human. In reality it is

the divine, the *Logos*, which is dominant, visible and worshipped while the human Jesus is conceded and concealed in the back. He is often claimed but seldom given a true and natural existence of his own. In reality, God the Father, the supposed First Person of the Holy Trinity, seems to be second while the Lord Jesus Christ, the supposed Second Person of the Trinity, seems to be taking over in such a fashion that God the Father often becomes invisible. Christianity, in its traditional popular sense, is really what the word literally means. It is really anthropomorphic.

11: The Incarnational theology is not only paradoxical. It is contradictory. Centuries of debates, difficulties, developments, political interferences, and controversies to pindown the true nature of Christ and his relationship to God are clear indications and proofs of the difficulties involved. These difficulties are inevitable and unavoidable. They can only be averted if we accept the dictum that the Gospel of Jesus has more to do with God the Father and our relation to our neighbors than to the person of Jesus himself. Without such frank and honest confessions even the metaphorical interpretations of the Incarnation in its traditional garb would be misleading.

12: The compilation and canonization process spread out over centuries, many regions, persons and intentions leaves a great many questions and impossibilities unresolved about the New Testament text as being the inerrant Word of God. Perjuries, insertions, textual violence and many other factors (discussed above) raise serious questions about the purity and authenticity of the text itself. All these difficulties are well recognized by a great many New Testament scholars. It is time to accept and highlight the human aspect of the New Testament.

13: The Qur'ān was canonized from its inception. Its compilation process was not spread over centuries but over a few years. The authenticity, purity and universality of its text is a historical fact admitted by Muslim as well as non-Muslim scholars and sources. Many questions and objections about various aspects of the Qur'ān have been raised by many non-Muslim scholars over the centuries. Now, there seems to be a sort of consensus among those who are actively involved in the field of the Qur'ānic studies regarding the unity, universality and purity of the Qur'ānic text. Moreover, the Qur'ānic challenge of producing a rival text like that of the Qur'ān stands unmatched, though efforts have been made, while fourteen centuries have already passed. On the other hand, its claim of divine protection, preservation and purity of text, made also fourteen centuries ago, has not been violated. The unity and universality of its text over these long centuries is a strong witness to that fact.

14: The Qur'ānic God Paradigm is transcendental. Its monotheism is strict and absolute. The Qur'ān has a systematically well explained conception of God's transcendence, otherness and uniqueness. It is supported and substantiated by countless verses, a variety of methods and arguments. Unlike the Bible, it is safeguarded against possible violations (like existence of other gods as true gods, their ability to harm or benefit without the leave of God, division of power, knowledge, or person or any other division within the Godhead etc.). Moreover, it is not a bare and abstract notion of transcendence but a balanced, vivid and live concept of God. The transcendent God is immanent by dint of His infinite knowledge, power, love, mercy and the other positive attributes spelled out in the text of the Qur'ān. Unlike the Bible, the Qur'ānic Paradigm is consistent. There is only One transcendent God, unknown in His essence but known through His

signs, attributes, qualities and actions. The idea of such a transcendent God is conveyed through the text of the Qur'ān consistently. Its strong ethical nature and egalitarian tone is also evident from the Qur'ānic text itself.

15: The Qur'ānic God Paradigm is not corporeal or anthropomorphic. The few seemingly anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān can be interpreted metaphorically. That could be done without inventing facts or metaphors which are not their in the text itself. Such a non-anthropomorphic explanations could be established either from the context (or from within the Qur'ānic text) or through metaphors commonly used in the language. This is what has been proved by a great many Muslim scholars and theologians over the centuries; however, these seemingly anthropomorphic phrases help create a modality helpful in the communication process between God and man without leading to corporealism if kept within the parameters and boundaries prescribed by the Qur'ān. Therefore, except for the absolute literalists, the mainstream Islamic thought has always refuted corporealism and anthropomorphism.

This is perhaps the reason that Islamic faith has not been secularized or shaken to the extent some other traditions have been over the past centuries. Ernest Gellner observes that "At the end of the Middle Ages, the Old World contained four major civilizations. Of these, three are now, in one measure or another, secularized. Christian doctrine is bowdlerized by its own theologians, and deep, literal conviction is not conspicuous by its presence. In the Sinic World, a secular faith has become formally established and its religious predecessors disavowed. In the Indian World, a state and the elite are neutral *vis-a-vis* what is a pervasive folk religion, even if practices such as astrology continue to be widespread. But in one of the four civilizations, the Islamic, the situation is altogether different."[1] He further argues that "there is one very real, dramatic and conspicuous exception to all this: Islam. To say that secularization prevails in Islam is not contentious. It is simply false. Islam is as strong now as it was a century ago. In some ways, it is probably much stronger."[2] He attributes this stability and resisting power to its "emphatic and severe monotheism, the view that the Message received by the Prophet is so to speak terminal, and that it contains both faith and morals- or, in other words, it is both doctrine and law, and that no genuine further augmentation is to be countenanced."[3] Therefore, it can easily be contended that the Qur'ānic God Paradigm has the potential to stand the ground against modern atheistic challenges and avert the dangers that have shaken other civilizations to the very core of their essence.

16: Modern man is getting more and more removed from God and seems to be faithless. One of the great reasons of this alienation is an anthropomorphic and corporeal concept of God along with the insistence upon the Bible as the inerrant Word of God verbatim. The irony of the fact is that instead of discarding the human aspects and interpretations of the Scriptures, modern man seems to be rejecting the Deity Himself. The death of God can be avoided by emphasizing the transcendent God who is beyond all shortcomings, all human qualifications, and does not seem to be created by man but is the Creator and Master of everything existing in the universe.

Such a notion of God has been aspired by all the three Semitic traditions though the text of the Bible is not consistent about it. By emphasizing non-corporeal and non-anthropomorphic elements in the Deity, one would not be terribly out of the boundaries or territories of these traditions. With the help of such a concept of God the wide gulf between alienated man and God can be narrowed

down and science and faith can be brought closer if not together. The modern science and philosophy seem to be opening up to belief in God.[4] Paul Davies, for instance, argues against purposelessness and meaninglessness of the universe in the following strong words: "Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strong that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact. There must, it seems to me, be a deeper level of explanation. Whether one wishes to call that deeper level "God" is a matter of taste and definition."[5] He observes that "Although many metaphysical and theistic theories seem contrived and childish, they are not obviously more absurd than the belief that the universe exists, and exists in the form it does, reasonlessly... We are truly meant to be here."[6] He believes that "science offers a surer path than religion in search of God."[7] At the same time he wants to distance himself from the "organizational-manipulative God" of theology.[8] He does not believe in the anthropomorphically personal God of religion.[9] His God is not a "a person in any simple sense."[10] He emphasizes the need to think of God in less anthropomorphic ways and not to have a "naive image" of God but perhaps think of God as transcendent "universal mind", "supreme holistic concept",[11] "Being-itself" or a "Creative Force" or as a "mathematician".[12] He argues that "Only a god that transcends space-time, that is above causality and manipulation, can have any real relevance for the natural activity that blazes all around us."[13]

John Leslie writes: "If God is real then his reality seems to me most likely to be as described in the Neoplatonist theological tradition. He is then not an almighty person but an abstract Creative force which is "personal" through being concerned with creating persons and acting as a benevolent person would."[14]

I am not saying that religion must follow the scientist's concept of God or subordinate revelation to science. What I want to say here is that a crude anthropomorphic notion of God is a great hurdle between modern intellectual thought and belief in God. This gulf can be narrowed down by emphasizing and insisting upon the transcendent God. The difficulty in believing today is not belief as such but rather having a concept of God that is non-anthropomorphic. Here the Qur'ān can contribute more than the Bible as having stressed more the importance of the Deity as the transcendent being, having emphasized the importance of not taking anthropomorphic imagery about God as if it were literally true of God and having consistently pinpointed and averted the dangers of an anthropomorphic notion of God.

1 E. Gellner, Postmodernism, Reason and Religion, Routledge, London and NY, 1993, 5-6

2 Ibid, 5

3 Ibid, 6; see also his Muslim Society, CUP, Cambridge, 1981

4 See details in Paul Badham's "Introduction" to his father's book "Verdict on Jesus", IKON, Wantage, 1995, xixff; see also Paul Johnson, "Peaceful Co-Existence", Prospect London, Issue 7, April 1996, 34-8; Terry Miethe, and Antony Flew, Does God Exist?: A Believer and an Atheist Debate, Harper, NY, 1991. I owe most of this data as well as the claim to a well researched recent paper by Paul Badham, "Modern Science and the Argument for God's Existence". I used the paper with his permission.

5 Paul Davies, The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World, Simon & Schuster, NY, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore, 1992, 16; 213ff; see also his God and the New Physics, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1983, 25ff, 214ff and his The Edge of Infinity, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1982, 171ff

6 The Mind of God, 231-2

7 God and the New Physics, 229

8 The Edge of Infinity, 171

9 See The Mind of God, 17, 191

10 Ibid, 17

11 God and the New Physics, 223ff

12 Ibid, 222; The Edge of Infinity, 188

13 The Edge of Infinity, 171

14 John Leslie, Universe, Routledge, London, 1996, 2

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